The MAD MYSTIC *and the* AMERICAN BEAUTY

March

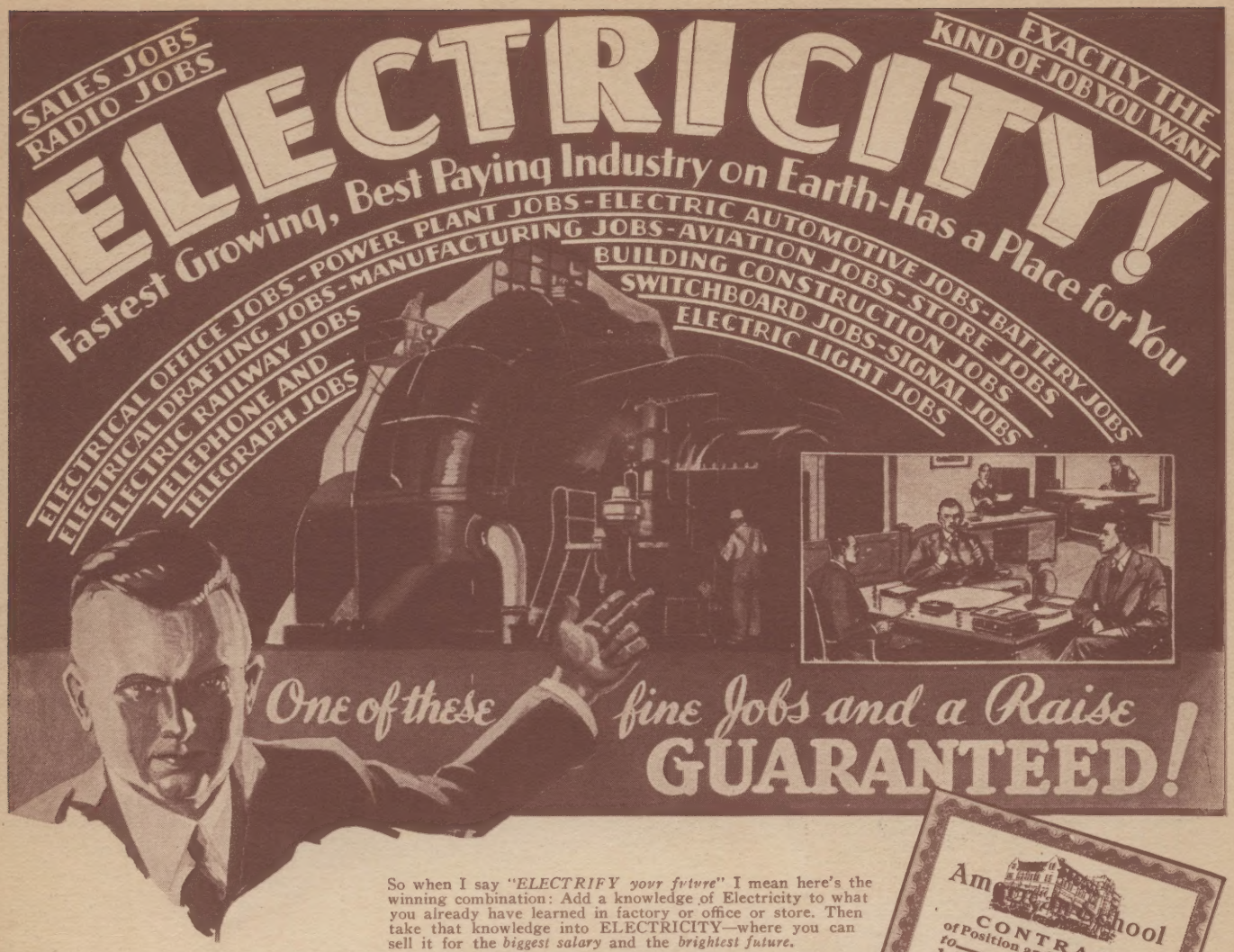
TRUE STRANGE STORIES

A MACFADDEN PUBLICATION

PRICE UNITED STATES 25¢ CANADA 30¢

The FIRST TIME THAT I DIED

The LOVE THAT LOST A THRONE



Mechanics—Office Men, Beginners, Clerks!

Men in all lines* WANTED *At Once, for Promotion in

ELECTRICITY!

Most of us think of Electricity as dealing entirely with the manufacture of machinery, the production and transmission of power, and work like that of the "Electrician".

Perhaps you do not realize that Electricity has become the biggest, and the fastest-growing industry on earth. That it is a HUNDRED giant industries, not one—employing MILLIONS of men and BILLIONS in capital. With positions for office men, salesmen, draftsmen, building-construction men, engineers and executives. And that it has a *place for you*—no matter what kind of work you are doing today, or prefer to do!

ELECTRIFY

Your Future!

Earn $35 to $100 a Week!

I am looking for ambitious young men who are dissatisfied both with their present pay and future prospects. I want to show them how easily they can get into Electricity—how they can increase their earning capacity and multiply their chances to get ahead *many times*—simply by switching over to *similar* work in Electricity.

Perhaps you are doing routine *office work* today in a line where your progress is slow and limited. Then let me show you how you can get one of the many office positions in the Electrical line. And how, with your present business experience, *plus a knowledge of Electricity*, you can earn a much bigger salary and advance rapidly to highly-paid executive positions.

Or if you are a mechanic—wondering how you can avoid remaining a mechanic all your life—I'll tell you how to become first, an *Electrical* mechanic, and then show you how you'll be in line for quick promotion to Expert, Engineer or Superintendent.

So when I say "*ELECTRIFY your future*" I mean here's the winning combination: Add a knowledge of Electricity to what you already have learned in factory or office or store. Then take that knowledge into ELECTRICITY—where you can sell it for the *biggest salary* and the *brightest future.*

How Dare We Guarantee You a Job and a Raise?

Here is our agreement to take you as you are, supply you with the Electrical training you need, and then get you a fine Electrical position at a substantial increase in salary, or the entire service will not cost you a penny. You may wonder how this is possible. But the explanation is really simple: The Electrical industries are growing so rapidly that the supply of trained men cannot keep up with the demand. There are more good jobs open, always, than men capable of filling them. We are in close touch with many big employers and they tell us they can place all the trained men we can supply.

And because we know all this, and how amazingly Electricity continues to grow into new fields, and because we know the *right kind of training* equips a man to get and keep a good Electrical job—we have dared to make this guarantee and to back it with our entire resources of over $2,000,000.00. Get in touch with me, and I'll show you that you can get an Electrical job and a raise—*without risking a penny of your money.*

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

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Prepared by* DUNLAP *and 29 Noted Engineers

With the cooperation of some of the biggest Electrical Corporations in America, we have developed a new method of home-training in Electricity—easier, simpler, faster and more practical. *Here is specific preparation for highly-paid Electrical positions.* Actual practice work with standard electrical tools and materials is just one feature. Built especially so men with ordinary schooling can understand it readily. Built by executives, engineers and educators from:

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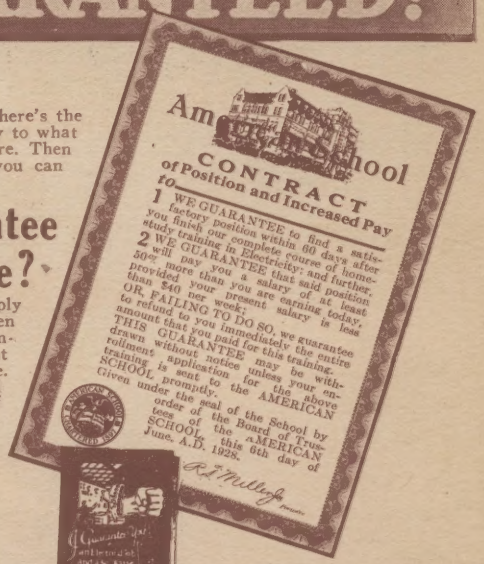
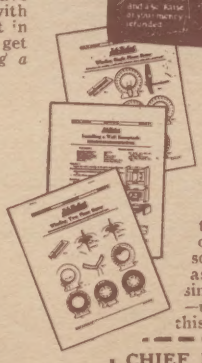
Mass. Inst. of Technology **Underwriters' Lab.**
Commonwealth Edison Co. **Cutler-Hammer Mfg. Co.**
American Tel. & Tel. Co. **Western Electric Co.**
(and others)

The American School

Dept. E-3314, Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago, Ill.





All These FREE!

If you would like to know exactly how you can get into this greatest and most interesting of all lines—if you would like facts and figures to prove that in Electricity, salaries are bigger and opportunities greater—if you want to see just *how* you can fit in and *where*—*mail the coupon below.* And without cost or obligation I'll send you our 36-page book about Electricity—our famous plan and guarantee of an Electrical Job and Raise—and some of the first lessons and job-tickets, as a sort of "sample" of the new, easy, simplified way you can learn Electricity—right in your home, in spare time. Do this now while you think of it.

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Electrical Division, The American School
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Age ..... Occupation .....

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Railway Postal Clerks get $1,900 the first year, being paid on the first and fifteenth of each month. $79.00 each pay day. Their pay is quickly increased, the maximum being $2,700 a year. $112.50 each 15 days.

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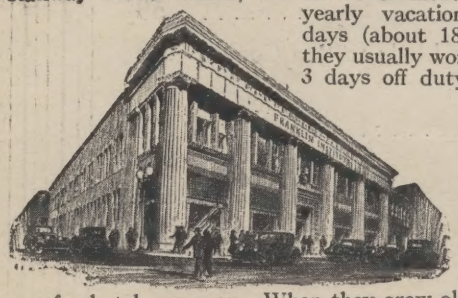
Railway Postal Clerks, like all Government employees, get a yearly vacation of 15 working days (about 18 days). On runs they usually work 3 days and have 3 days off duty, or in the same proportion. During this off duty and vacation, their pay continues just as though they were working. When away from home they get extra pay for hotel expenses. When they grow old, they are retired with a pension.



GET FREE LIST OF POSITIONS. Fill out the coupon. Tear it off and mail it today—now, at once. This investment of two cents for a postage stamp may result in your getting a Life Time Government Job.

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- ☐ General Clerk..... ($1,260-$2,100)
- ☐ Prohibition Agent..... ($2,300-$3,400)

Name.....

Address.....

Use This Coupon Before You Mislay It—Write or Print Plainly

1929 TRUE STRANGE STORIES MARCH

Vol. I No. 1

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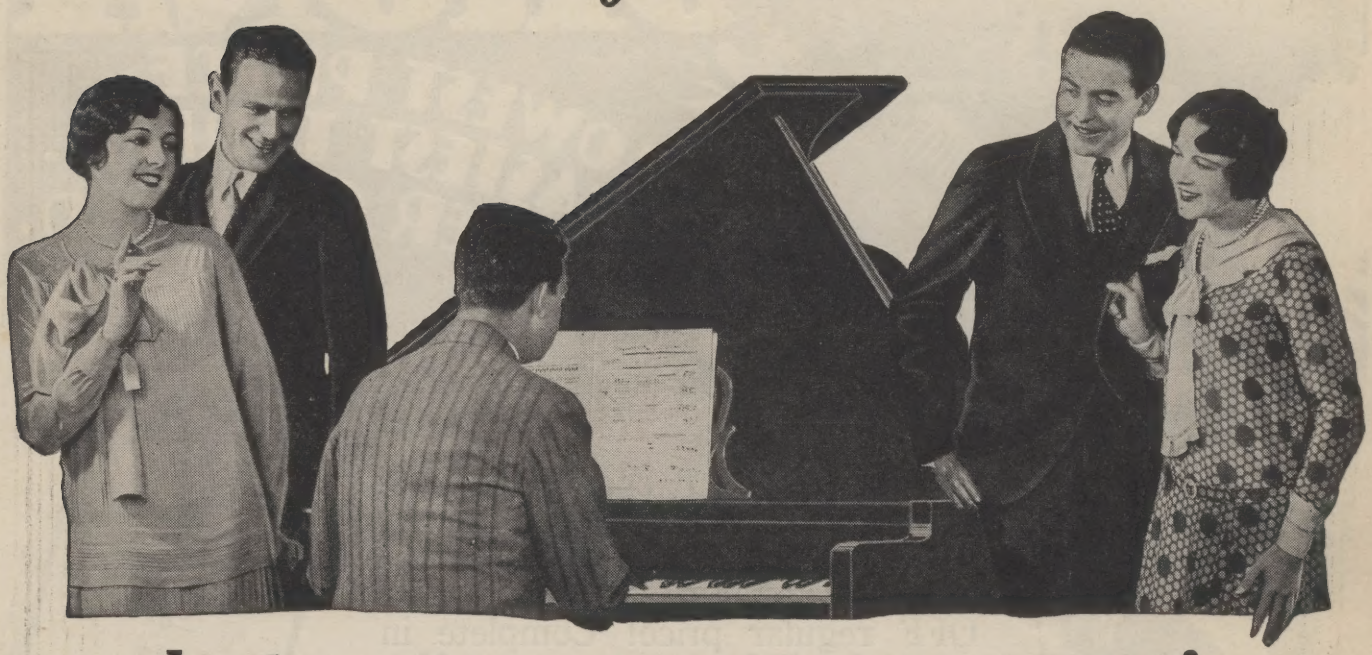
"He can't play... turn on the radio" *they all shouted*



but my revenge was sweet!

"NOW that everyone is here, let's tune in on a good station and get some snappy dance music."

Olive Murray was full of pep as she adjusted the dials of her radio. "Shucks," she said as she discovered someone making a speech. "Let's try another station."

But there wasn't a note of dance music on the air. "Something like this *would* happen the night of my party," she moaned. "Never mind, there'll be a good orchestra on at 10:30."

You could see disappointment written all over the guests' faces. Suddenly I bucked up my courage and took Olive aside. "What's the piano closed for?" I asked.

"Why not? No one here plays. I only wish somebody could play, though."

"I'll try to fill in for a while, Olive."

"You're joshing, Dick! You never played before at parties."

"That's right, Olive, but I'll play tonight," I assured her.

I could tell she didn't believe me. For as she announced that I was to entertain with some piano slections I caught her winking to one of the fellows.

And what a roar the crowd let out when I sat down.

"He can't play," called out a voice good-naturedly from the rear. "Let's turn on the radio and listen to the speeches."

"Sure," added one of my friends, "I know that he can't tell one note from another. It's all a lot of Greek to him. How about it, Dick?"

I said nothing. But my fingers were itching to play.

"Give him a chance," said Olive, "*maybe* he can play."

A Dramatic Moment

That settled it. There was no maybe about it. I played through the first bars of Strauss' immortal "Blue Danube Waltz." A tense silence fell on the guests as I continued. Suddenly I switched from classical music to the syncopated tunes from "Good News." Every one started to dance. Pep was once more in order. They forgot all about the radio. But soon, of course, they insisted that I tell them all about my new accomplishment. Where I had learned . . . when I had learned . . . how?

The Secret

"Have you ever heard of the U. S. School of Music?" I asked.

A few of my friends nodded. "That's a correspondence school, isn't it?" they exclaimed.

"Exactly," I replied. "They have a surprisingly easy method through which you can learn to play any instrument without a teacher."

"It doesn't seem possible," someone said.

"That's what I thought, too. But the Free Demonstration Lesson which they mailed me on request so opened my eyes that I sent for the complete course.

"It was simply wonderful—no laborious scales—no heartless exercises—no tiresome practising. My fear of notes disappeared at the very beginning. As the lessons came they got easier and easier. Before I knew it I was playing all the pieces I liked best."

Then I told them how I had always longed to sit down at the piano and play some old sweet song—or perhaps a beautiful classic, a bit from an opera or the latest syncopation — how, when I heard others playing, I envied them so that it almost spoiled the pleasure of the music for me —how I was envious because they could entertain their friends and family.

"Music was always one of those never-come-true dreams until the U. S. School came to my rescue. Believe me, no more heavy looking on for me."

Half a Million People Can't Be Wrong!

You, too, can now *teach yourself* to be an accomplished musician—right at home—in half the usual time. You can't go wrong with this simple new method which has already shown over half a million people how to play their favorite instruments. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special "talent." Just read the list of instruments in the panel, decide which one you want to play, and the U. S. School will do the rest. And bear in mind no matter which instrument you choose, the cost in each case will average the same—just a few cents a day. No matter whether you are a mere beginner or already a good performer, you will be interested in learning about this new and wonderful method.

Send for Our Free Book and Demonstration Lesson

Our wonderful illustrated Free Book and our Free Demonstration Lesson explain all about this remarkable method. The booklet will also tell you all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger-Control*. They prove just how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument *by note*, in almost no time and for just a fraction of what old, slow methods cost.

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Name _____

Address _____

Employed By _____

I GUARANTEE NEW HAIR

in These Three Places—

OR DON'T PAY ME A CENT!

ARE you sincerely anxious to be done with dandruff, itchy scalp, falling hair and baldness? Do you *really* want to grow new hair?

Perhaps you've *already* tried hard to overcome these afflictions. Perhaps you've put faith in barbershop "tips," and used all kinds of salves, massages, tonics, all with the same results . . . lots of trouble and expense but no relief!

Now, consider what *I* offer you. And figure out for yourself what a handsome proposition it is. I GUARANTEE to grow new hair on your head—on the top, front or temples — IN 30 DAYS . . . or not one red penny of cost to you.

Isn't that a different story from those you've heard before? I don't say, "try my wonderful remedy—it grows hair!" I say, and I put it in *writing*, "I GUARANTEE to grow hair . . . or no cost!"

My Method Is Unique!

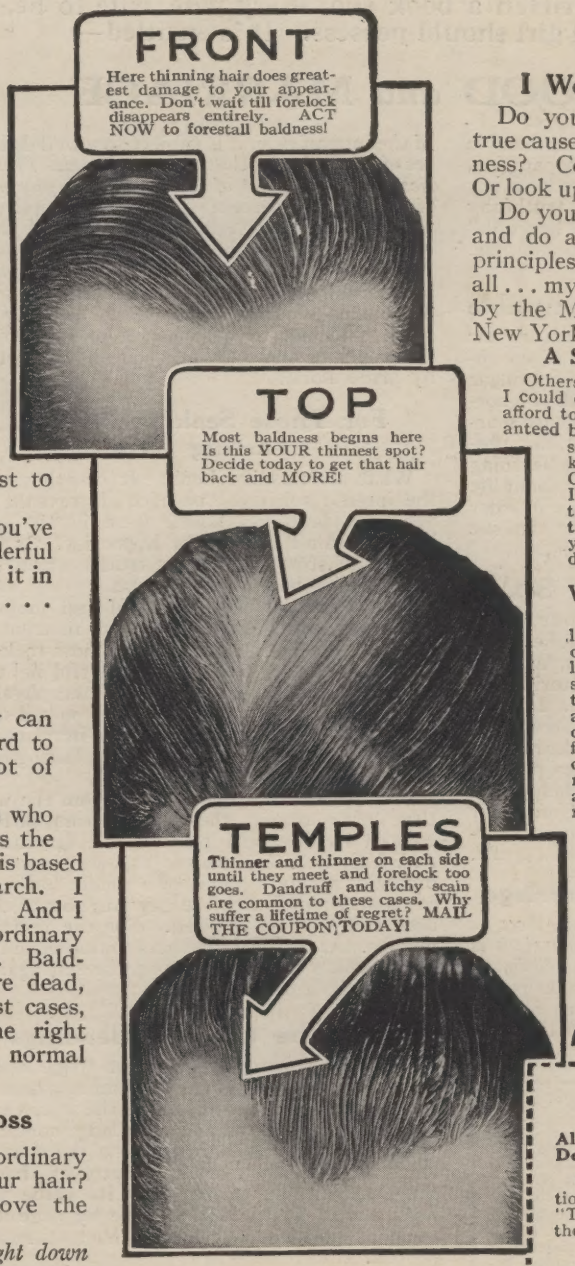
Naturally, you say to yourself, "How can anyone make such a guarantee? It's hard to grow hair. I know, for I've tried a lot of things and failed."

Ah, that's exactly the reason thousands who formerly suffered from scalp troubles bless the day they heard of me. For my treatment is based on science, on years and years of research. I *studied scalps*, not how to sell treatments. And I found, as did leading dermatologists, that ordinary surface treatments of the scalp are futile. Baldness begins at the ROOTS. If roots are dead, nothing can grow new hair. But in most cases, roots are only *sleeping*, waiting for the right treatment to bring them back to healthy, normal life.

I Reach the *Cause* of Hair Loss

Now, I leave it to you. How can ordinary treatments penetrate to the roots of your hair? How can ordinary tonics or salves remove the *real* cause of baldness?

My treatment goes *below* the scalp, *right down towards the hair roots*, awakening them to new action. My treatment works surely and quickly, all the while stimulating the tiny blood vessels around the roots to new life and action. And with just the mere investment of *a few* minutes a day, thousands get these results from my treatment . . . or they never pay a cent!



DANGER: One, two, three—BALD! And perhaps total baldness, say leading dermatologists, if you neglect any one of the three places shown above. But so gradually does hair depart, so insidiously does baldness creep up on the average man, that thousands fail to heed the warnings. But there is hope for everyone, no matter now thin the hair. Read my message to men growing bald. Study my guarantee. Then ACT!

I Welcome Investigation

Do you want absolute proof of the true causes and proper treatment of baldness? Consult your family physician. Or look up medical reference books.

Do you want positive proof that I can and do apply these accepted scientific principles. I offer you the best proof of all . . . my personal guarantee, backed up by the Merke Institute, Fifth Avenue, New York.

A Square Deal Guaranteed!

Others may make rosy but flimsy promises. I could do that too! But I don't. I couldn't afford to, for every statement I make is guaranteed by the Merke Institute. This scalp research bureau, established 13 years, is known to thousands from Coast to Coast. It has a reputation to keep up. It wouldn't dare to back me if I didn't tell the truth. So when I *guarantee* to grow hair or not a penny of cost, you're absolutely sure of a square deal.

Why Suffer Years of Regret?

Before you turn this page take a look in the mirror at those thin spots on your head! Think how you'll look when *all* your hair is gone. Consider how much prestige and attractiveness you'll lose. Then decide to act at once! Right now, tear out the coupon shown below and mail it in for the FREE booklet giving my complete story. In it you'll find, not mere theories, but scientific FACTS, and the details of my "hair grown or no pay" offer. My treatment can be used in any home where there is electricity. Send the coupon NOW! And by return mail the booklet is yours without the slightest obligation. Allied Merke Institutes, Inc., Dept. 2073, 512 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

MAIL IT *TODAY!*

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Please send me—without cost or obligation—in plain wrapper, copy of your book, "The New Way to Grow Hair," describing the Merke System.

Name.....

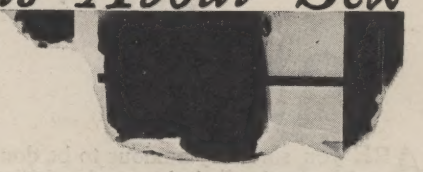
Address.....

City.....State.....

(My age is.....)

Women Who Want To Win and Hold Men—

Must Know These Vital Truths About Sex



Bernarr Macfadden has written a book that every wife, wife to be, or mother of a young girl should possess. It is entitled—

WOMANHOOD *and* MARRIAGE

EVERY day newspapers carry innumerable stories of marital unhappiness, separation, divorce, scandal and misery. And under every one of these accounts one could truthfully write, "Ignorance again has taken her toll." And the price of ignorance is immeasurable. For in many cases it is life itself.

Ignorance is no longer Excusable

Until recently there was some excuse for women marrying with no knowledge of the responsibilities of wifehood. Because a vulgar prudery had thrown a dense black wall of ignorance around everything having to do with marriage. A sinister barrier that for years prevented girls and young women from learning before marriage those essential things about life and sex that every woman must know—in order to intelligently become the wife of the man she loves and the mother of beautiful children.

Complete Knowledge of Sex

Now modern society accepts no excuses. The alibi *ignorance* carries no weight. For Bernarr Macfadden's acclaimed book, Womanhood and Marriage, unveils the mysteries surrounding sexology for once and for all. In plain instructive language this book discusses sex—woman's most vital problem. Bernarr Macfadden sets forth in clearest detail every particle of information that would be of help to a woman. Nothing is omitted. Unfamiliar medical terms are not used. Bernarr Macfadden talks plainly. A spade is called a spade.

The Secret of a Happy Marriage

However, keep this fact in mind—*there is nothing wrong with marriage—upon marriage is based the home, and the home is the foundation of our nation.* Marriage as an institution is the greatest, most wonderful success in all the world. But, like all other great institutions devised by Nature for the good and protection of the human race, it is subject to a well defined set of natural laws that *must be obeyed. Therein lies the whole secret of happy or unhappy marriage.* A great percentage of all the people who marry are entirely ignorant not only of these natural laws but of the fact that such laws exist. And so, since Nature plays no favorite, grants no immunities, is it any wonder that thousands of couples separate every year, our divorce courts are full to overflowing and countless thousands of other "homes" are held together by pride alone?

For Those Seeking Perfect, Lasting Love

What an amazing book. It breathes with the intense spirit of the age. It reveals the vital sex problems which were in the past hidden behind the veil of hypocrisy. It is a wonderful story of homely truths which will help to bring happiness and love.

How to make love beautiful and lifelong; how to prepare for the greatest moment in woman's life—her wedding day; how to keep the home shining with the wonderful light of happiness; how to protect mental and physical contentment. Never before have you had such an opportunity to avail yourself of information which will guide you to the perfect, lasting love that is every woman's heritage.

Can a woman protect herself from the wolf that lurks around the corner, from pitfalls created by her own passion and ignorance? . . . Yes. . . . And, moreover, every woman's dream of a happy home, of a tender husband, of rooms ringing with the gay laughter of children can now be realized. For the truth is mighty. Armed with the facts contained in this great book a woman can guard herself against many of life's greatest dangers.

Read the Chapter Headings

We could write page after page about "Womanhood and Marriage" and not be able to give you an idea as to half of the store of information this treasure of knowledge contains. Rather than try, we are printing the chapter titles for your observation. But even that is not enough. To really know its value you must see it, go through it page by page and learn at first hand just how much it means to you.

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WOMEN *Read These Chapter Headings*

WOMANLY IDEALS

Ideal Womanhood
The Meaning of Sex
The Mental and Spiritual Signification of Sex
Am I a Complete Woman?
The Old Maid
Choosing a Husband
Judging a Man's Fitness
Marriage and the Drink Question
Personal Habits of the Young Man

LOVE AND COURTSHIP

Why Think About Marriage?
Marriage and Its Alternatives
When to Marry
Should a Girl Marry from a Sense of Duty?
Love Making and Its Dangers
The Girl Who Has Made a Mistake
True Love and Its Expression
Dancing and Dress
The Essentials of a Happy Marriage
The Wedding Preparations

PHYSIOLOGICAL LAWS OF MARRIAGE

The Physical Relationship of Marriage
The Basis of Marital Happiness
Regulating the Relation of Husband and Wife
Making Love Life-Long
Mistakes and Excesses that Destroy Love
The Pros and Cons of Birth Control
Hereditary and Prenatal Influence
The Requirements of Pregnancy

DOMESTIC HARMONY

Why Children Are Necessary to Happiness
The Question of Money
The Snare of the Boarding House
The Question of Friends
The In-Laws
Quarreling and Making Up
Jealousy—The Green-Eyed Guardian of Honor
When "The Other Woman" Appears
The Erring Husband
When Love Seems Dead
The Divorce Problem

PHYSICAL AND MARITAL DEFICIENCIES

The Unsatisfactory Husband
The Frigid Wife
Masturbation
Sterility
Menstrual Disorders
Special Diseases of Women
Displacements and Their Correction
Tumors

BUILDING GLORIOUS AND PERFECT WOMANHOOD

Womanly Periodicity
Determining Sex
The Menopause or The Change of Life
How to Build Vigorous Womanhood
Improving and Beautifying the Bust
Exercise for Womanly Strength

His Salary Was Raised while others were reduced

"Up to the time I enrolled for a course with the International Correspondence Schools, I had only a grade-school education. Since enrolling, I have advanced to a much better position, where my salary is nearly four times as much as I was making previously. I would not be able to hold my present position had I not taken your course. Recently I received a nice increase in salary, while other men were being reduced."

READ that last sentence again—"Recently I received a nice increase in salary, while other men were being reduced."

There could be no better proof of the value of an I. C. S. course than that. It shows that the trained man is given preference over all others and paid more money, even in slack times, if his work deserves it. It shows that there are always bigger, better jobs open for men who have the foresight to prepare for them in spare time.

The home of the International Correspondence Schools—"The University of the Night"

Jesse G. Vincent was a toolmaker before he enrolled with the I. C. S. He is now Vice-president of the Packard Motor Car Co. Walter Chrysler, President of the Chrysler Corporation, is also a former I. C. S. student. So is "Eddie" Rickenbacker, the famous flying ace, who is now Vice-president of the Rickenbacker Motor Car Co.

An I. C. S. course enabled Fred W. Southworth to leave a poorly paying job he had held *for twenty years* and get a position as a salesman. In six months he increased his salary 300%.

George A. Grieble is another man who lifted himself out of the rut by spare-time study. He was a stone-cutter earning $15 a week when he enrolled with the I. C. S. He now has his own architectural and engineering business in Cleveland and his income is "between $10,000 and $15,000 a year."

If the I. C. S. can help these men to get out of the rut and make good, it can help you too. If it can raise the salaries of other men, it can raise yours! At least find out how.

The way is easy! Just mark the work you like best in the coupon below. Then mail it to Scranton today.

This doesn't obligate you in any way, but it brings you information that may start you on a successful career. This is your opportunity.

Mail Coupon for Free Booklet

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
"The Universal University"
Box 5701, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject *before* which I have marked X:

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Industrial Management
- ☐ Personnel Management
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- ☐ Accounting and C. P. A. Coaching
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Salesmanship
- ☐ Secretarial Work
- ☐ Spanish ☐ French
- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ English
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- ☐ Railway Mail Clerk
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- ☐ Mechanical Draftsman
- ☐ Machine Shop Practice
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- ☐ Gas Engine Operating
- ☐ Civil Engineer ☐ Mining
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ Plumbing and Heating
- ☐ Steam Engineering ☐ Radio
- ☐ Architect
- ☐ Architects' Blueprints
- ☐ Contractor and Builder
- ☐ Architectural Draftsman
- ☐ Concrete Builder
- ☐ Structural Engineer
- ☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
- ☐ Automobile Work
- ☐ Airplane Engines
- ☐ Agriculture and Poultry
- ☐ Mathematics

Name.....

Street Address.....

City..... State.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal

Enjoy Perfect Vision

... without these eye crutches

Thousands Are Throwing Their Glasses Away

Why Don't You - You Can

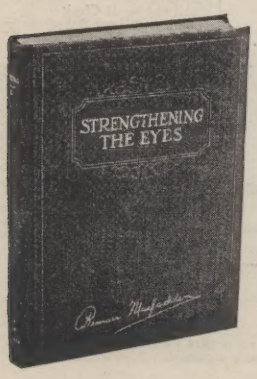
GLASSES are only eye crutches. They simply bolster up the eyes—they cannot cure or eliminate the conditions responsible for the trouble. They are useful just as crutches are useful for an injured leg, but they can no more restore your eyes to their former strength than crutches can mend a broken limb. The real help must come from other sources. In the case of the eyes it is exercise.

Over 20 years ago Bernarr Macfadden, father of Physical Culture, had a most trying experience with his eyes. Due to many nights of hard literary work under poor artificial light, they became terribly strained. The idea of wearing glasses was intolerable, so always willing to back up his theories by experimenting upon himself, he immediately started in upon a course of natural treatment that he fully believed would help him.

The results were so entirely satisfactory that he associated himself with one of the few really great eye specialists and together they entered upon a period of research and experiment covering many years.

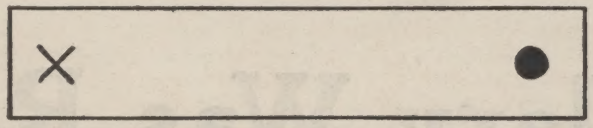
A Startling Revolutionary System of Eye Training

Upon their findings has been based a remarkable new scientific system of eye-training which quickly enables you to train these muscles of the eye so that you can make them work properly at all times, and without effort or strain. This new system has been prepared by Bernarr Macfadden, in collaboration with the eminent ophthalmologist who discovered the real truth about eyes.



Although this remarkable system has only recently been introduced to the public, it has been in use for more than twenty years, and it has been conclusively proven of inestimable value.

If you already wear glasses, find out how you can discard your glasses—and see better without them. If you do not wear glasses, but feel that your sight is failing, then find out how a few minutes each day assures you perfect sight without the use of glasses. If you are a parent send at once for this method, and learn how to save your children from the scourge of near-sightedness, how you can save them from the slavery of eye-glasses, and how you can train their eyes so they will always have perfect, normal vision.



Make This Test of Your Eyesight

Do you know that there is a spot in your eye where you are totally blind? Prove it now. Hold this diagram about 10 inches directly before you. Close the left eye, and fix the right eye on the cross. Then bring the diagram gradually closer and about 7 inches the black spot will suddenly disappear. This is but one of the important points of information about your eyes which you should know, particularly if you have any eye trouble.

For What Price Would You Sell Your Eyes?

The benefits which you can derive from this new method of eye training may seem too surprising to be true. Yet you cannot doubt its efficacy when you read the letters from the people who have found it of immeasurable value, when you know that it has helped over 2,000 children to regain normal vision in a short time. Your eyesight is your most important possession. It can never be replaced if it is lost. And since no amount of money could make you sacrifice your eyes, you owe it to yourself at least to investigate what this new scientific method can do for you.

Here is a man who writes: "Strengthening the Eyes has enabled me to completely forget the optician. It has practically cured a bad case of astigmatism."

And here is another who says: "By faithfully following the directions given in your Eye Course I have discarded glasses worn for years, and have had absolutely no trouble for the past two years."

Another grateful reader of this helpful book writes: "I had been wearing glasses since I was eight years of age and could not go a day without them. I am now twenty-four and with just a little effort in practicing the Eye Exercises each day for a period of two months, I have been able to stop wearing glasses entirely."

These inspiring results bring a message of hope to everyone who is troubled with weak eyes or poor sight. There is hardly any condition that is beyond the reach of Bernarr Macfadden's revolutionizing method of eye training. Even the hopeless cases, as shown in the letter reproduced here, respond with almost unbelievable results to the treatment outlined by the noted physical culturist.

You Can Try This Course At Our Risk

We want every reader of this publication afflicted with eye-trouble to examine Mr. Macfadden's wonderful course and try the eye exercises that it prescribes. In order to bring this about we are willing to send the entire course on approval, giving you the privilege of returning it within five days after receipt if not satisfactory. The price of the course has been placed within the means of everyone—only $3.00, plus delivery charges. It is less than you would pay for a single pair of glasses. Can you afford not to take advantage of this offer and all it may mean to you? Not if you value strong eyes. So mail the coupon now, before it slips your mind, and you will never have to wear glasses again.

Macfadden Publications, Inc.,
Desk ST-3, Macfadden Building,
1926 Broadway, New York City.

Entirely at your risk, you may send me your course of Eye Exercise. Upon receipt I will pay the postman $3.00, plus delivery charges.

It is understood if after trying the course for five days I decide not to keep it you will immediately refund my money upon return of the course.

(We pay postage on all cash orders)

Name.....

Street.....

City.....State.....

Canadian and foreign orders—cash in advance.

Now You Can Reduce 2 to 4 Lbs. in a Night

Eat what you please
Wear what you please
Do what you please
Take no risky medicine

Send the coupon for your first three Fayro Baths

THOUSANDS of smart women have found this easy way to take off 2 to 4 pounds once or twice a week. These women take refreshing Fayro baths in the privacy of their own homes.

Fayro is the concentrate of the same natural mineral salts that make effective the waters of twenty-two hot springs of America, England and Continental Europe. For years the spas and hot springs bathing resorts have been the retreat of fair women and well groomed men.

Excess weight has been removed, skins have been made more lovely, bodies more shapely and minds brighter.

The Hot Springs Are Now Brought to You

A study of the analyses of the active ingredients of the waters from twenty-two of the most famous springs have taught us the secret of their effectiveness. You can now have all these benefits in your own bath. Merely put Fayro into your hot bath. It dissolves rapidly. You will notice and enjoy the pungent fragrance of its balsam oils and clean salts.

Then, Fayro, by opening your pores and stimulating perspiration, forces lazy body cells to sweat out surplus fat and bodily poisons. Add Fayro to your bath at night and immediately you will lose from 2 to 4 pounds in an easy, refreshing and absolutely harmless manner.

Consult your physician and he will tell you that Fayro is certain to do the work and that it is absolutely harmless.

Fayro will refresh you and help your body throw off worn out fat and bodily poisons. Your skin will be clearer and smoother. You will sleep better after your Fayro bath and awaken feeling as though you had enjoyed a week's vacation.

Lose Weight Where You Most Want To

Fayro reduces weight generally but you can also concentrate its effect on abdomen, hips, legs, ankles, chin or any part of the body you may wish.

Results Are Immediate

Weigh yourself before and after your Fayro bath. You will find you have lost from 2 to 4 pounds. And a few nights later when you again add Fayro to your bath, you will once more reduce your weight. *As soon as you are the correct weight for your height do not try to reduce further.* No need for violent exercise. No need for drugs or medicines. Merely a refreshing Fayro bath in the privacy of your own home.

Try Fayro at Our Risk

The regular price of Fayro is $1.00 a package. With the coupon you get 3 full sized packages and an interesting booklet "Health and Open Pores" for $2.50 plus the necessary postage. Send no money. Pay the postman. Your money refunded instantly if you want it.

HERE'S PROOF

Read what Fayro Baths have done for others

"Three Fayro baths reduced my weight 11 pounds in 8 days. I feel better than I have felt for years."

"I weigh 16 pounds less and feel younger and sleep better. Fayro is wonderful."

"My double chin vanished in the magic of Fayro baths."

"My hips were always too prominent until I commenced Fayro baths. I have lost 12 pounds."

"Thank you for Fayro. I lost 14 pounds in three weeks; feel better and certainly look better."

"Since childhood my thick ankles have always been a source of embarrassment. Fayro baths have reduced them beautifully. Thank you very much."

For obvious reasons, names are not quoted, but every letter published has been authorized and names and addresses will be given on request.

If each healthful bath of Fayro does not reduce your weight from 2 to 4 pounds, we will refund your money without a question. You risk nothing. Clip the coupon and mail.

Fayro, Inc.
821 Locust St., Pittsburgh, Pa.

STR-3-29

Send me 3 full sized boxes of Fayro in plain package. I will pay the postman $2.50 plus the necessary postage. It is understood that if I do not get satisfactory results with the first package I use, I am to return the other two and you will refund all of my money at once.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

If you live outside the United States send International Money Order with coupon.

Young Man Play Fair With Yourself

Learn the Truth About the Sex Question

AT last the truth is written. The great mysteries of sexology torn aside. And now for the first time you can get the real truth about the sex question.

This is an age of plain thinking and frank speech. No longer can a big, vital problem like the sex question be hidden away as a thing to be ashamed of. People are demanding the truth about these things.

And so Bernarr Macfadden has lifted the veil. He has told the truth about mankind's most vital problem in a frank, straight-from-the-shoulder style that will appeal to every man who reads his remarkable book.

Manhood and Marriage

is a fearless, ringing challenge to prudery and ignorance. It contains the fruits of Bernarr Macfadden's lifelong study of one of the biggest problems confronting the young manhood of the world.

He has had to surmount extraordinary difficulties in the preparation of the book. But the truth is mighty! It can neither be ignored nor suppressed. There was overwhelming need and demand for a fearless, plain-speaking book on sexology. The wall of ignorance that was wrecking millions of lives must be broken down.

The book was written, published and placed on sale. Today in tens of thousands of homes this great work is one of the chief factors in promoting health, strength and happiness.

Life's Handbook

Manhood and Marriage enters the sanctuary of the most secret phases of your inner life. It grips you with suggestions that are personal and confidential. It furnishes definite and practical information on vital subjects, pure in themselves, which are frequently surrounded with vulgar mystery.

The problems of man frequently assume tremendous importance. They thus become a source of worries that ultimately assume a tragical nature. And the need for the answer to the query "What shall I do?" often grasps the victim with terrifying intensity.

It is well, therefore, that conditions and problems of this sort should be clearly and emphatically presented. For the outcome may mean success or failure, health or disease, or even life or death. Both single and married men needed to know the facts, so Bernarr Macfadden spent more than a quarter century compiling the authentic information given you in this book.

Send No Money

This big book is so powerful, so crammed full of facts hitherto neglected by old-fashioned sex hygiene, that we sincerely believe it should be in the hands of every man. Therefore, we do not hesitate to send it to you upon approval. You need send no money now—just fill out the coupon and mail it today. The book (in plain wrapper) will be sent to you by return mail. When the book arrives, pay the postman $3.00 plus a few cents delivery charges. Then take five full days to read and examine it thoroughly. If at the end of that time you do not think that Manhood and Marriage is worth much more than $3.00, return the book and your $3.00 will be cheerfully refunded.

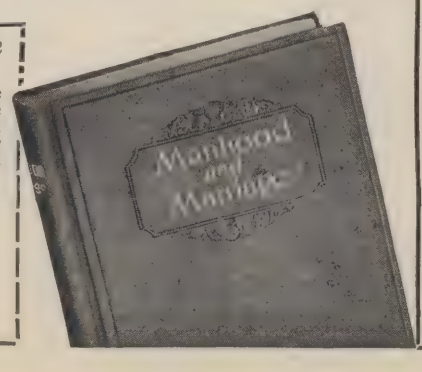
Macfadden Publications, Inc., Desk ST-3 22
Macfadden Building, 1926 Broadway, New York City

Send me by return mail a copy of Manhood and Marriage plainly wrapped. I will deposit $3.00 plus a few cents postage with the postman when the book arrives. It is understood that if for any reason I return the book within five days after receipt, my $3.00 will be refunded. We pay postage on all cash orders.

Name .....
(Print name and address)

Street .....

City..... State.....
Canadian and foreign orders cash in advance.



READ

these Chapter Headings

- The Importance of Virility
- Am I a Complete Man?
- Is Marriage a Necessity?
- The Age to Marry
- Selecting a Wife
- Love Making and its Dangers
- Establishing the Intimate Relations of Marriage
- Marital Mistakes and Excesses
- Regulating Marital Intimacies
- Should Husband and Wife Occupy Separate Beds?
- Conserving Love—The Basis of Marital Happiness
- A Man's Duty toward a Pregnant Wife
- Should Husbands be Present at Childbirth?
- Are Children Always Desirable?
- The Crime of Abortion
- Divorce Physiologically Considered
- Can a Wrecked Marriage Be Reclaimed?
- The Erring Wife
- Jealousy—the Green-Eyed Monster
- Quarreling and Making Up
- Sewing Wild Oats
- How Virility Is Destroyed
- The Truth About Masturbation
- Seminal Losses
- The Plain Facts About Varicocele
- The Troublesome Prostate Gland
- Impotence and Allied Sexual Weaknesses
- Sterility
- How to Build Virility
- Exercises for Building Virility
- Foods that Help to Build Virile Stamina
- Diseases of Men—Their Home Treatment
- The Prevention of Venereal Disease
- Various Problems of Young Men

I Sell Records a Queer Way

So people tell me, because I will gladly send to any person who sends me his name and address, a selection of ten records absolutely ON TRIAL, entirely at my risk. Choose any records you want.

Furthermore, I positively insist that you return the records to me at once, if they are in any way inferior to records that sell for three or four times as much. Don't be "sorry" for me, but shoot the records back, and let me stand the postage expense both ways, unless the records are better, clearer and richer in tone than any records you have ever before had, at any price.

I have built a million-dollar business in records on just these "queer" methods, trusting absolutely in the honesty of my customers, and making them the sole judge of whether or not the records will cost them even one cent.

I've built these records to give you pleasure, enjoyment and some real honest good times for months and years to come. I've tried to study the wishes and tastes of the great music-loving public and I've collected in this list below, the very CREAM of my entire catalog. All the records are electrically recorded—and nearly all of them have been done within the last few months, and are in the very latest and best style of the present day. They are all in the standard ten-inch size with music on both sides and play on any phonograph, just like 75-cent records. They include the most recent hits, as well as famous old favorites; and I'm willing to stake my last dollar that they are GOOD.

Any 10 Records $1.98

Special List of BEST Sellers

My Angel — Hallelujah I'm A Bum
Girl of My Dreams — Sonny Boy
Ford Has Made A Lady Out of Lizzie
Wreck of the Old 97
Ramona
Rovin' Gambler
My Blue Heaven — Red Wing

Send No Money

10 Days' Approval

Choose any ten records you want and simply write their catalog number on coupon below. Send no money. See terms on coupon and see how fully I protect you in every way.

POPULAR AND STANDARD SONGS

2432 Sonny Boy
Dancing Neath Dixie Moon

4228 Hallelujah I'm A Bum
The Dying Hobo

2398 Ramona
Valley of Memory

2407 Girl of My Dreams
Dear Old Pal

2437 There's A Rainbow Round My Shoulder
When You're Not Here

4180 Blue Ridge Mountain Home
Lane of Dreams

4174 Casey Jones
Waltz Me Around Again Willie

4167 The Preacher and the Bear
The Sting of the Bumble Bee

4178 Break the News to Mother
Bird In A Gilded Cage

4185 Picture That's Turned To Wall
White Wings

4209 Oh Dem Golden Slippers
Kingdom Coming

4131 Wreck of the Old 97
Wreck of the Titanic

4170 Gypsy's Warning
Don't You Remember

4227 Climbing Up Golden Stairs
Lindy Lou

2426 Jeannine I Dream of Lilac Time
Come Back to Romany

4135 Rovin' Gambler
Little Log Cabin in Lane

4133 Jesse James
Butcher Boy

2386 My Ohio Home
Alice of the Pines

2381 Ford Has Made a Lady Out of Lizzie
Clancy's Wooden Wedding

2366 My Blue Heaven
Back of Every Cloud

4141 Wish I Was Single Again
If You Want to Find Love

4160 Sweet Hawaiian Kisses
Blue Hawaiian Moon

4118 May I Sleep In Your Barn Tonight?
When I Saw Sweet Nellie Home

4117 Where River Shannon Flows
Rose from Ireland

4171 Red Wing
Waters of Minnetonka

4119 Hand Me Down My Walking Cane
Captain Jinks

2334 Terrible Mississippi Flood
End of Shenandoah

4038 Sleep Baby Sleep (Yodel)
Roll On Silvery Moon (Yodel)

4090 In Baggage Coach Ahead
Under Some Old Apple Tree

4086 Floyd Collin's Fate
Pickwick Club Tragedy

2331 Ain't She Sweet
Bootlegger's Daughter

2272 Rudolph Valentino
Little Rosewood Casket

4150 New River Train
Show Me My Mammy

4172 Wreck of Number Nine
Freight Wreck at Altoona

4173 Boston Burglar
Cowboy's Lament

4198 My Old New Hampshire Home
Ida Sweet As Apple Cider

SACRED SONGS

4075 Church In Wildwood
Voice of Chimes

4046 Nearer My God to Thee
Lord Is My Shepherd

4069 When Roll Is Called Up Yonder
Throw Out The Life Line

4091 Old Rugged Cross
Beyond the Clouds

4057 Jesus Lover of My Soul
Safe in Arms of Jesus

INSTRUMENTAL

4193 Whistler and His Dog
Powder Puff

4189 Drowsy Waters
Herd Girl's Dream

4162 Blue Danube Waltz
Skaters' Waltz

4138 By Waters of Minnetonka
Over the Waves

4068 Arkansas Traveler
Turkey In The Straw

4136 Humoresque
Spring Song

4061 Listen To Mocking Bird
Song Bird (Both Whistling)

4217 Irish Washerwoman
Mrs. McLeod's Reel

4016 Irish Jigs and Reels, No.1
Irish Jigs and Reels, No.2

4218 Merry Widow Waltz
Lullaby From Ermine

RACE RECORDS

7021 I Need A Good Man Bad
Can't Be Worried Long

7033 Hit Me in the Nose Blues
It's All Coming Home To You

BLUES

7023 John Henry Blues
St. Louis Blues

7025 Yellow Dog Blues
Hard Times Blues

7026 Deep River Blues
Loveless Love Blues

POPULAR DANCES
All with Vocal Chorus

1541 My Angel (Angela Mia), Waltz
Coming Thru the Rye

1540 Old Man Sunshine
Sidewalks of New York

1559 I Loved You Then As I Love You Now
Gee But I'm Blue Over You

1510 Ramona
If I Didn't Love You

1521 Rag Doll
Draggin' the Dragon Blues

1502 Mary Ann
Blue Hawaiian Moon

1488 Among My Souvenirs
Some Day You'll Remember

1463 My Blue Heaven
Found Best Girl Of All

1497 After My Laughter Came Tears
Carry Me Back to Connemara

COMEDY

4002 Flanagan's Second Hand Car
Hy and Si and the Line Fence

4004 Flanagan In Restaurant
Flanagan's Married Life

4230 Uncle Si at Village Barber
Uncle Si and Hiram Swapping Horses

4168 Jail Birds
Wedding Bells

4211 Andy Goes A Hunting
Andy Gets Learnin'

HAWAIIAN

4156 La Golondrina
Dreamy Moon

4023 My Old Kentucky Home
O Sole Mio

4084 Alola Land
Honolulu Bay

4009 Palakiho Blues
One, Two, Three, Four

TEAR OUT COUPON AND MAIL

MUTUAL MUSIC CLUB, SS-43, 135 Dorchester Ave., Boston, Mass.

You may send me on 10 days' approval 10 records listed below by catalog numbers. When the 10 records arrive, I will pay postman a deposit of only $1.98 (plus postage from factory), in full payment. I will then try the records 10 days in my own home, and if I am disappointed in them or find them in any way unsatisfactory, I will return them, and you agree to refund at once, all that I have paid, including my postage expense for returning the records.

1_____ 6_____
2_____ 7_____
3_____ 8_____
4_____ 9_____
5_____ 10_____
(Write Clearly)

Write three substitutes below to be shipped only if other records are out of stock.
(Write Clearly)
1_____
2_____
3_____

IMPORTANT ☐ Place cross mark in square at left if you wish three 10-cent packages of steel needles included in your order; recommended for these records.

Name_____

Address_____
(Write Clearly)

City_____ State_____

Don't accept baldness! Don't think that fate has singled you out to be particularly unfortunate. And that unfortunate you must remain for the rest of your life. For baldness is positively *unnecessary*. There are definite methods for preventing it.

No matter how gifted a man may be otherwise. No matter how intelligent or accomplished — no matter how strong or virile— or influential; he never quite receives the respect or admiration due him, if few or no hairs grow on the top of his head.

Surely she was the loveliest girl he had ever met. He hoped to see her again often—— Then, as he started to lift his hat—he remembered! His smile seemed frozen.

He *was afraid* to take off his hat! He remembered with many little stabs of pain, the startling insufficiency of his hair. He remembered that he was on the verge of baldness. He remembered the taunts he had suffered in the past. His hatless spectre had loomed up between them, and no ghost was ever so displeasing!

He realized how impossible it is to place the halo of romance around a bald head!

So many thousands of men let that bald spectre come between them and the best things of life. It steps between them and romance; it aims at self-confidence—it even blocks success! And it need not be endured!

It makes no difference how many kinds of tonics you apply to your scalp—it matters not how much money you spend in barber shops. Everything is useless unless the simple laws of nature are followed. Just as it is true that the organs of the body will not function properly without a supply of rich, red blood coursing through them, so it is also true that the hair will not be healthy, cannot be luxuriant and abundant—unless there is a proper blood supply at its roots.

Bernarr Macfadden's Amazing Discovery

Bernarr Macfadden, threatened with baldness, spent months in the scientific study of hair. He unraveled fact from theory, truth from speculation. Yet he applied some new ideas and found them workable. The results astonished even himself. For in place of the thin, sickly, straggly hair which had been falling out, he developed a mass of luxuriant, thick hair.

The successful methods and discoveries which he applied, were incorporated into his great book, "Hair Culture." In this he discusses not only the causes and treatments for falling hair and baldness, but also you find out exactly what your hair is—how it grows, why it dies and falls out, why it loses its color, why it becomes brittle—the causes of dandruff, too oily or too dry hair. Mr. Macfadden then tells you how to overcome all these troubles, without any tonics or apparatus! He shows you how, by following his natural methods, you can make your hair grow thicker, stronger, more beautiful than perhaps you have dared to hope!

What do you know about

Your Hair?

What are the most scientific preventatives of baldness?
Should a wire brush ever be used on the hair?
When should the hair be forced to fall out?
Of what benefit to the hair is singeing?
How often should the hair be washed or dampened?
What is the one great cause of dry scalp and hair?
What is the best soap for oily hair? for dry hair?
What are the three causes of baldness?
What is a dry shampoo and how does it affect the hair?
What is the strongest stimulant that can be used on the scalp?
What one thing is most important to luxurious growth of hair?
Why does hair fall out after sickness?
What causes gray hair?
Is dandruff contagious?
What has diet to do with dandruff?
What is the best way to kill the dandruff germ?
How can the eyebrows and eyelashes be strengthened?

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"Don't send one cent in advance, just fill in and return the coupon and the book will come to you by return mail. When the postman hands it to you deposit only $2.00 plus a few cents delivery charges with him. Then after you have kept "Hair Culture" for 5 days, after you have tested the methods, if you are not absolutely satisfied return the book to us and your $2.00 will be promptly refunded.

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They Didn't Forget

BOYHOOD intimacies are among the world's finest friendships. However, in a great majority of cases, they are not continued in adult life. School boy pals just naturally seem to drift apart upon reaching manhood. Some times this is caused by removal to different localities, frequently separated by considerable distances, by divergent business interests and by home and family ties. But that men do not forget those who shared their boyhood joys and griefs, those who in youth were closer to them than brothers, was proved recently through two curious happenings in New York City.

Two boys were chums in Marietta, Ohio, many years ago. One, upon reaching manhood, became a derelict. The other became a famous man, noted alike in the worlds of finance and politics. But neither the years nor the difference in their modes of existence could kill their friendship.

When the down-and-outer fell ill on the Bowery some time ago, his friend heard of it and sent money to pay the doctor's bills until he was able to get about again. And after that, each month, he sent him a check for $25, which the "bum" would cash and spend in speakeasies. One day, the Bowery derelict was found dead in the street. The body was carted to the morgue where it lay, waiting to be removed to a pauper's grave.

Then some one telegraphed the dead man's friend.

The friend hastened to New York, went down to the morgue to see his old pal Bradt Hulbert, the tramp, then told the authorities to give the body a proper burial and send the bill to him—Charles Gates Dawes, Vice President of the United States.

One drab morning recently, Police Magistrate Dale took his place on the bench in the shabby Bridge Plaza Court in Brooklyn, to carry through his daily task of passing judgment upon the prisoners arrested the previous night. One by one the miserable offenders passed before him, pleading their cases; asking for "another chance."

Then a man was pushed toward the rail; one whose fingers twitched, whose feet shuffled and who kept his head down, shamefacedly trying to hide his features.

The Magistrate took one glance at the ragged, nerve-racked picture of failure before him. Then he stared at the man. In a moment, his lips quivered so he could not speak. Then:

(*Continued on page* 14)

"How can I get into Aviation?"

Read this Answer from

A World Famous Trans-Atlantic Pilot

Aviation is waiting for no one! Too many millions of capital are already invested—the demand for air service of **every** kind is increasing too fast. Aviation demands men who KNOW. Men who can Do. Men who can step into the real jobs and command the real salaries. Landing fields, municipal airports, plane and equipment factories, air mail and passenger lines, service and sales organizations—all are leaping ahead in the fastest, most amazing development that any industry has ever known. In such racing, feverish activity, **where** is there any room for a man who has nothing to offer? An empty pocketbook is no drawback—but Aviation has no place, no patience, no **time** for empty hands or empty heads! Aviation is taking-off for the greatest non-stop flight in history—and the men who will go along and climb to the top are the men with a foundation of FACTS under them.

Walter Hinton

Walter Hinton was pilot of the famous NC-4, first plane to fly the Atlantic; he piloted the first plane from North to South America; he was first to fly to the headwaters of the Amazon. During the War he was a crack flying instructor for the Navy. Today—with a course that experts agree is the most complete and practical ever produced—Hinton is training keen-sighted men for the Big-Pay jobs in Aviation.

You Must be 16 or Over

To take an active part in Aviation you must be at least 16 years of age. If your are under 16, please do not ask for Lieut. Hinton's Book because it will not interest you.

You Don't Have to Fly; 40 Different Jobs on the Ground PAY BIG Too!

To succeed in Aviation—make BIG MONEY—you need not necessarily be a pilot. There must be many thousands of pilots, certainly. But for every plane that flies, there's an immediate need for trained men in more than **forty** different important jobs on the ground. Construction, motor and instrument experts—airport managers, service foremen, salesmen—all make **real** money. Some of them even bigger pay than pilots earn. But every last one of them must have the FACTS. Today's problem—YOUR problem—is to LEARN Aviation **quick.** And right there is where Walter Hinton is achieving the biggest success of his career.

CHOOSE YOUR JOB
(Here's a Few of the 40)

Designer and Engineer, Pilot, Engine and Plane Mechanic, Rigger, Wire Worker, Electrician, Welder, Instrument Maker, Wood and Metal Worker, Draughtsman, Plane and Motor Inspector, Airport Operator, Radio Expert, Assemblyman, Aerial Surveyor and Photographer, Aerial Transport Manager, Salesman.

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(*Continued from page* 12)

"It's a good many years since I've seen you, Tom. Do you remember me?"

"Yes, I do," Tom McAlinden replied. He passed a hand over his dry lips and his voice quavered. He was being arraigned for the eighteenth time in a Brooklyn court for intoxication. He had been in the work-house five times. He was fifty-five.

"You and I were playmates, pals," the Magistrate recalled. "You were going to be a great lawyer and I was going to be a truck driver."

McAlinden, who now drives a truck when he works, said he remembered.

"Fate switched things around, didn't it, Judge?" he asked.

"It did, Tom. But don't call me 'Judge.' I'm just Harry to you. The same Harry you saved from drowning one day when I fell into the river at the end of Grand street, chasing a dog. Now my time has come to do something for you.

"As long as I'm on the bench you'll never go to jail again." He drew some bills from his pocket and passed them to the prisoner. "Now get out into the sunshine and see if you can't be a man."

Tom McAlinden went out into the sunshine.

And Magistrate Dale went to his chambers, where he remained alone for half an hour before he called the next case.

They Guard Their Secrets

THE Gre Gre—or the Gre Gre Bush Society—as it is known to the English-speaking people of Africa—is the world's oldest secret organization. The society is divided into branches, each presided over by a Zoe, or head devil, and its membership consists of boys of various ages from four to eighteen.

It is curious to note that in Liberia, where the organization is strongest, members are permitted to learn English so that they may attend Christian services and read the Bible. Still, though hundreds have declared conversion to the God of the white man and his religion, not one ever has betrayed the secrets of the organization or refused to carry out the mandates of the Zoes.

Native men are permitted to gaze upon the Zoes. But for a native woman to glimpse one of them means that she will be slain.

The Zoe, never seen by others than his supporters except when on the march, is a fearsome personage to behold. In addition to the paint, feathers, hair from animals, beads and bits of metal with which both he and his followers deck themselves, he wears a hideous mask and carries a short spear.

A Zoe's exact status never has been definitely established by the whites; particularly whether his post is elective or inherited. However, he has absolute authority over his followers, to whom he is both teacher and taskmaster, and no case of rebellion against his mandates is known, probably because of the youth of his pupils and the innate superstitious reverence for authority in the African nature.

At frequent intervals, trailed by his flock, he parades through the towns and villages. Then, in accordance with the Gre Gres' understood law, all boys are compelled to present themselves so he may inspect them. Later, those who have met with his approval, are spirited away. The boys are taken to undisclosed sections of the bush, where they are kept for various periods.

When a youth whom the Zoe has determined to keep near him for years reaches the age of ten he is taught the trade which he must follow later in life; carpentering, hut building, weaving, dyeing cloths, et cetera.

When a Gre Gre reaches manhood he must marry, establish a home and begin rearing a family. In connection with marriage, the society has another system, the like of which is to be found in no other country. Working as a branch of the organization is a band of "holy women"—though they never see a Zoe—which looks after and teaches the girls who are to become the wives of the Gre Gres. At frequent intervals these women go about selecting the prettiest and healthiest native girls, who are removed to isolated settlements beyond the towns where they are kept in inclosures surrounded by high bough fences and taught to cook, sew and perform other household duties. This segregation safeguards them, for no Gre Gre can marry any but a virtuous woman. A member of the society always goes to one of these places when ready to choose a wife. No girl dares dispute such a choice and refuse to marry, lest they be visited by a Zoe, with the inevitable consequences.

Another strange thing to be noted in Central Liberia is that one seldom sees a grave. Except when missionaries are authorized to conduct a burial in the case of a Christianized native, the bodies of the dead are disposed of in a secret manner somewhere in the interior. It is believed such bodies are turned over to the Gre Gres for disposal, but this is not known positively. Anyway, the natives consider it a mockery of the will of the gods to have graves where natives can go and mourn over their dead.

Grocery Bills all Paid —and $80 a Week besides!

That's My Offer to You

IF YOU want money to pay *all* your grocery bills *every week*—with $80 to $125 a week left over—just send me your name and I'll show you how to get it.

With grocery bills all paid and $80 to $125 a week extra in your pocket, you won't have to take off your hat to anybody. And this big money is easy to make—*if you get in the right business.*

Van Allen, Ill., found that out when he took hold of my proposition. Formerly he worked for an oil company at $100 a month. I showed him how to make as high as $125 a week! Frank Brown, N. D., quit a twelve-hour-a-day factory job to line up with me. His first six days brought him $70 net profit. John Tyler, Pa., worked at small-pay jobs for years before I told him about my plan. Now he averages $30 to $35 a day.

Any One—Anywhere—Can Make Big Money

These people will tell you that, if you're out after real money, you've got to line up with a reliable company. We are an old, established house, with resources of more than a million dollars. Our business is the largest and most successful of its kind in the world. We distribute all kinds of groceries *direct from factory to user.* Thus we give highest quality at rock bottom prices. We have thousands upon thousands of customers in every section of every State. Each month these customers order hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of our products. Last year they bought fifteen million packages. This put two million dollars in the pockets of our Representatives.

We Need Your Help

Our business is growing by leaps and bounds. We need more men and women at once in every territory to help us handle this increased business. If you join forces with us, all you will have to do is call on your friends and these established customers of ours and send their orders in to us. You will have your own exclusive territory free from all competition. You will handle all business dealings with our customers in your territory. *You,* and *you alone,* will make a profit on every order that comes in. Our customers *must* order through you, because we *never sell through stores.* This makes it easy to establish a permanent business—have hundreds of steady customers—and big profits every day.

THIS HUDSON COACH

My Gift to You

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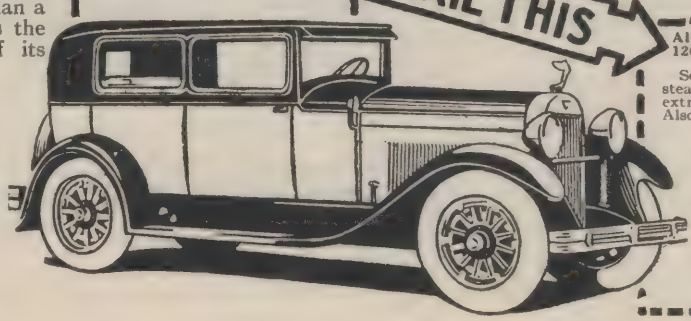

No Capital or Experience Needed

You don't need any capital, training or experience to get into the big-pay field. Francis Jones, N. Y., a former bookkeeper without a bit of selling experience, made enough money his first year to build himself a fine twin house while living off the fat of the land. Henry Albers, Ohio, has earned as high as $47 a day in this easy, pleasant work. Formerly he struggled along with ordinary jobs that kept him in the small-change class. Mrs. B. L. Hodges, N. Y., averages $18 to $20 a day. Mrs. K. R. Roof, S. C., made $50 the first week *in spare time.* None of these people had a bit of training or experience to start with. So you can do as well or better.

Send No Money

If you want to make $80 to $125 a week for full time—$2 to $4 an hour spare time—plus extra cash to take care of all your grocery bills—get full particulars about our Profit-Sharing Offer that sets you up in a permanent, big-pay business of your own—a business that's yours for life and that pays bigger profits the longer you are in it. You risk nothing—invest nothing—agree to nothing. I furnish everything you need—including a newest model Ford Tudor Sedan or Hudson Coach so you can get around and pick up our customers' orders quickly and easily. Don't miss this opportunity. It means money. Mail coupon now for all the facts.

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Folds Like a Suitcase with snap locks and carrying handle. So light and convenient—easily carried wherever you want it.

Plays any standard 10-inch disc record. Plays two ten-in. records with one winding. Weighs 17 lbs. Waterproof imitation leather case, with hinged lid. Size 16x12x8½ in. Records inside of lid are secured so they will not rattle or break. Holds 15 records. Has quiet spring motor, tone arm and reproducer with indestructible diaphragm and wide throat for full sound volume. Outfit includes 15 double face 75c New Electric Process Records—30 selections. Shipping weight about 25 lbs.

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We guarantee: that you get everything in this phonograph so far as concerns music reproduction that a $250 phonograph can give you, also the exact reproducer, the exact style of tone arm and the same grade of records. That's why you get, on this wonderful offer, **absolutely the best** in music that any phonograph ever gave.

$2.50 a Month

If within 30 days you decide not to keep the outfit, send it back and we'll refund your $1.00 plus all transportation charges. If you keep it, pay only $2.50 a month until you have paid that sensational price on this special sale—only $24.95. Think of it, a first class high grade phonograph and 15 latest double face Records (30 selections) a complete outfit, ready to play, only **$24.95!** Seize this opportunity while it lasts. Send the coupon NOW!

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A new portable of the most modern kind. Light and easy to carry. Ideal for every purpose. Plays all records with wonderful tone and volume. Beautifully covered in red Baby Alligator genuine DuPont Fabricoid (absolutely waterproof. This portable is equipped with many new, exclusive features, including a long air column horn of the newest type, the finest reproducer on the market, a strong pulling, even running motor, double nickeled hardware throughout, self contained album to conveniently carry 15 records.

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The Strangeness of Life

An Editorial by Webster Scofield

All life is fascinating, mysterious, strange.

Fiction writers strain to achieve strange effects. Life creates them.

Because it has become a platitude to say that truth is stranger than fiction, many overlook the fact that the phrase contains one of the most amazing truths ever uttered.

Fiction is bound and limited and must be logical. Life is bold, courageous, absurd, extravagant. Somber or gay, humorous or violent, life is untrammeled and, above all, baffling.

The greatest books are those based on real life. An illustration of this is the recent book of a great American novelist who produced a best seller by writing the true life record of the tangled loves of an average boy. He invented little. The force of the novel lies in its recital of the strange drama that had actually been lived.

TRUE STRANGE STORIES, which makes its bow with this issue, believes the most absorbing thing in the world is vibrant living. It believes that stories of the thrilling surge of varying emotions in human beings thrown into odd situations, told by the men and women who undergo these vivid, soul-stirring experiences, are more intensely interesting than any novel.

TRUE STRANGE STORIES, therefore, will enable you every month to read true life stories showing how strange real life really is. Often the events that happen to ordinary people are so odd, so curious, that they themselves are baffled to explain the mystery of them.

Impetuously, militantly, life sweeps by. The splendors of passion may lead people into inexplicable hazards ending, perchance, in heartbreak—and the telling of the story will leave you breathless. What is the strange influence that will turn a woman, once aroused, into either a tigress or a nun? What the force that sends a man through queer adventures before fate sweeps him down into the depths, or upward to the heights? TRUE STRANGE STORIES is going to give you the stories of men and women who have lived strangely, mostly told by themselves.

Millions of people are living as intensely, as colorfully, today as such outstanding heroes of history whose life stories are record of amazing strangeness: Caesar, Joan of Arc, Napoleon.

Only when the last mystery in life is lifted, when Man has penetrated every secret of nature and of human emotion, when men and women cease to wonder at the glory and inherent strangeness of life, will TRUE STRANGE STORIES find itself without the absorbing material, drawn direct from life's strangeness, that it will give you every month.

A Destiny Stronger than Love

"I cannot marry you, Pierre—I want one man who is just—a friend"

I THINK that the story of Eve Lavalliere, the famous French actress, is the most amazing in the annals of Paris, and probably the most heartrending. She was the idol of the boulevards, and to this very day, her name signifies romance, adventure and mystery to the multitudes of France.

Gaby Deslys, the beautiful dancer, who had a king for a lover, was her only rival for the affections of French theatergoers. And even she, who died at the height of her fame, even she who had kept her public in a state of ferment by her pranks, did not startle France so violently as did Eve Lavalliere with her strange renunciation.

Several accounts of this affair got into the newspapers at the time. People supposed to have known her talked freely and loosely. When the surprising story was spread that Mlle. Lavalliere was entering a convent, the report which gained greatest circulation was that, through some accident, she had lost her beauty.

That talk was silly, and unfounded—it was nothing short of ridiculous.

There are usually two people in a woman's life who know the whole truth about those events which appear mysterious to the world. They are her priest and her physician.

I WAS Eve Lavalliere's physician since the day when, as a very young girl filling a first engagement in a cabaret, she turned her ankle, and I was summoned from the audience to her dressing-room. As the years passed I became her trusted friend; and to be her friend was also to be her admirer.

I think that was in the year nineteen hundred, but perhaps the date is not important. I had come to this cabaret having heard that they had a new performer, a young woman who was making quite a sensation.

I sat patiently through many boring numbers, when finally Mlle. Lavalliere was announced, and out upon

Claimed My Bride

I was Eve Lavalliere's physician. As the years passed, love made me her devoted slave

She was a gay star of Paris until a miracle swept her from my arms into ——

As Told By Pierre Bernard to Sylvia B. Saltzberg

the stage stepped a tall girl, of beautiful stature, with the promise of later voluptuousness. She was dressed in man's clothes, as she frequently was, but somehow her attire only served to accentuate the feminine lure of her lovely features, her white skin, her glistening blonde hair.

EVE specialized in what we French call "divertissements," which means a little bit of everything—a monologue, a song and dance, an impersonation, a poetic recitation, a pantomime. But especially was she good at impersonations, with which she could sweep her audience into a perfect frenzy of laughter.

She had finished her impersonations; and had reappeared in feminine costume, when she turned her ankle and, with a little cry, sank to the floor. Immediately wild commotion ensued, and when a physician was called for, I volunteered. Ordering her to be carried to her dressing-room, for the press of people about her was suffocating, I went around the back way and took charge.

The injury was not serious, and required only tight binding in order to prevent swelling. Of course I set about my task in a professional way, yet, being human, I could not fail to notice the perfection of the ankle I was binding, its roundness, the smooth satin skin, the unbroken curve of her instep.

There was nothing saintly about Eve Lavalliere then. Indeed her manner bore a more marked resemblance to that of her notorious ancestor, Mlle. de Lavalliere, a favorite of King Louis the Fourteenth. It was for this other Lavalliere that a Paris jeweler, at the request of the libertine monarch of France, created the throat ornament still called by her name.

It is not dull and sober women for whom such trinkets are designed, or who become confidantes of kings, and the court favorite had bequeathed to her actress descendant more, much more than a collection of rare lavallieres.

Despite the discomfort of having an ankle bound tightly, Eve flirted with me outrageously, and although I tried to maintain my professional dignity as young physicians do, I felt the force of her joyousness, her vitality, her delight in life. I had ordered everybody out of the room, but Eve's manager, Monsieur Samuel, remained behind without asking for permission. Having been away from Paris for a year, I did not know what everybody else knew about these two, yet it seemed to me that this man Samuel was more than a manager to her.

A big dark-haired man, he had an infectious smile and a spirited manner somewhat like Eve's. It was obvious from the instant I stepped into the room that even a very good friend would not be so alarmed at a slight injury. He was utterly devoted to her, and they exchanged long, intimate looks which could mean only one thing.

YET that was Eve—ready to coquette and doing it even in the presence of her lover. She was honest about everything she did.

"You are wonderful, M'sieu Doctor," she said when I had finished. "Your fingers are as light as the touch of a fly."

I remember flushing, for I had not practised medicine long enough to be hardened to the compliments of women patients.

"It was nothing, I assure you, Mademoiselle," I returned.

She laughed squarely into my face, and there was nothing more disconcerting than the direct gaze of Eve's large, liquid brown eyes. Then turning to Samuel, she added, "You must pay the doctor before he leaves."

I bowed deeply. "It has been a privilege to minister to these charming feet which have given so much pleasure

in the dance to so many thousands of people, Mademoiselle."

Eve and her manager were both delighted at this compliment and she clapped her hands in applause. I know American readers will be somewhat surprised at a physician talking in this fashion. I have been in this country for two years and watched with interest how differently people behave both in professional and social intercourse.

A physician here would bandage the ankle just as skilfully, take his fee, depart with a polite "good-day," and feel certain that he would never see his chance patient again. In France, however, it would be considered rude not to compliment a beautiful woman, and beautiful women expect it even from strangers.

I was not surprised when two weeks later I received an invitation to a party at Eve's home. Though this incident happened years ago, the details are etched in color in my mind, for Eve at home was a different creature from Eve on the stage.

IN public this actress preferred rôles which required men's and boy's clothes. In the attire of the Paris *garcon* or a boulevard "masher," or a trim army officer, she was as smart a figure—as daring and impudent a figure as ever trod the boards of The Odeon.

At home Eve discarded that for the strictly feminine. Not only her boudoir but all the rooms in her apartment bore the ruffled, gilded, jewelled stamp of femininity. She wore fluffy things, did her hair in soft girlish ways, and was sympathetic and even wistful. It is true, as women were fond of remarking, that she was not so chic in her female attire.

Eve Lavalliere, at the height of her career, was the gayest and most capricious comedienne of the French stage

But as for me, I preferred Eve at home, whatever the style of her gowns. That was the real Eve, thoughtful, quieter, interested in the welfare of others.

I was received as an old friend, and introduced to various celebrities. There was music, and Eve sat between Samuel and me. Her proximity made my heart beat faster, as the mere thought of her had done for the past two weeks. I was completely dazzled by her presence.

The party itself was a quiet affair, no orgies, no undue noise, no wild demonstrations as rumor had it. Nothing could have been further from the truth of Eve's parties. Champagne was served but nobody became intoxicated. The sparkling drink merely sharpened the wits of Eve's brilliant men guests, and brought a reflected sparkle to the eyes of the women. There was dancing in her salon, but merely the lancers and the waltz such as one might have seen in any drawing-room in the city.

I claimed her just as soon as I could, and when our dance was finished, we found ourselves near an alcove which proved to be a small conservatory. This type of structure was popular in those days. From the outside of the house it looked like a huge semi-circular bay-window completely of glass.

Leading Eve into the warm fragrance of it, I sat down beside her on a marble bench. Impulsively I reached out for her hand, and covered it with mine.

"Tell me something about yourself, M'sieu Doctor," she said. "About your plans, your ambitions."

"THERE is nothing to say, Mademoiselle," I replied. "I am only a young physician with an office newly opened in the hope that patients will come to it."

"But surely you are ambitious," she protested. "You must hope to become a famous, a great physician."

I detected a hint of mockery in her eyes, and her soft voice.

"Why do you assume that, Mademoiselle?"

She smiled. "Because at your age one hopes for great things out of life."

"But Mademoiselle," I explained, "I am at least seven years older than you are!"

"Yes, Dr. Pierre," she laughed, using my Christian name without hesitancy. "A woman is always older, even a young woman, and perhaps wiser."

I kissed her hand. "You are infinitely beautiful, Mademoiselle."

She shook her finger at me. "Ah—it has begun," she said as if with regret.

"What has begun?" I questioned.

"I am not going to tell you," she answered, her face growing suddenly serious. "You must be known as my personal physician, Pierre," she went on. "That will help you considerably."

"But I cannot take advantage—" I began, and Eve interrupted me.

"You are not taking advantage, Doctor. I wish it so. I have already told my friends about your skill. I think patients will start to come soon."

I realized instantly that this young, impulsive, beautiful girl had done me a good turn which unquestionably

'You are wonderful, M'sieu Doctor! Your fingers are as light as the touch of a fly!"

would benefit me. Yet strangely this piece of luck saddened me, a mood which she detected instantly.

"What else is troubling you, Dr. Pierre?" came her soft voice.

I gathered courage under the force of her interest. With our arms almost touching, our cheeks so close, I might have pressed mine to hers without moving. I felt she was more precious, more to be desired, than anything else in the world.

"Eve," I said, summoning all my boldness. "You are all I care about. I love you more than anybody, anything in the whole world."

She inclined her head gravely, and there was so much affection in her smile, that I felt no compunction in declaring my love for her, strangers though we appeared to be. I told her that my ambitions and plans which I had entertained before I had met her would mean nothing to me without her.

I assured her that she was the only woman I could ever care for, and, as the years proved, I was not wrong to say so. Eve did not stop me, but listened to my words with a sincerity unusual for a girl who already had the reputation of an experienced coquette.

Her hand, her warm, vibrant fingers reached for mine. And with her smile, which always beautified her face, that smile which always bore a trace of mockery even in emotional moments, she said, "Pierre, you take this thing far too seriously."

I WAS offended and about to rise when her hand restrained me. Then she leaned her shoulder against mine, almost as if in caress.

"You must listen to me as I listened to you, Pierre," she continued. "All my friends exhibit these symptoms, go through this stage before they are really my friends. They imagine themselves in love with me."

Upon noticing how I winced with pain at this, her tone assumed even softer accents. "Perhaps you are even a little in love with me. To be truthful, and sometimes it is hard for me to be entirely truthful, I like men to be a little in love with me. But soon the symptoms change, the pain disappears as you will find out for yourself, and—" with her inimitable smile, "you will just like me a little."

As I bent to kiss her hand, realizing the grace of her refusal, I felt her fingers smooth my hair.

Just then Samuel, her manager, found us. If he felt any jealousy, he certainly did not show it.

She looked up to him and said, "M'sieu Samuel, I have found a new friend."

"I am very glad," he answered in his cheerful, booming voice which made me feel he meant it.

It would be difficult for me to describe my reaction, but suffice it to say that it convinced me that these two people loved each other deeply and devotedly. My insight proved correct, for at the time, though Eve had many who sought her favor, her love was given only to one man—this Monsieur Samuel, her manager.

AFTER that I was a frequent guest in their home, but I must confess that my feeling for her did not lessen in its intensity. My practise grew, since a great many followed the lead of the French actress whose brilliancy glistened more brightly from day to day.

I was the only outside witness to their secret wedding which was solemnized in a small obscure church. When, later, a child was born to Eve and Samuel, the public did not know that they were legally married.

Here I would like to recount an incident which gives a glimpse of Eve without her make-up, without the boldness and laxity she was expected to display behind the footlights.

Whenever she needed medical service, for a cold, or a bad headache (she was not ever very ill), I was called in. Several months before she expected her child, they retired to a chateau at Tavence, which, with their combined earnings, they had bought sometime before. The place was an old feudal castle, and fulfilled all Eve's craving for luxury.

Perched high on the Vosges hills behind the little Lorraine town of Thuillieres, the chateau with its tall spires and towers overlooked the district in which St. Joan of Arc was born.

Afterwards I used to wonder if there was anything significant in their choice of this particular home. Perhaps it is a district whose inhabitants are singled out for divine favor. Perhaps it is a region of miracles. Who knows?

My first visit to the chateau was at her request, and naturally I thought I had been called to give her some medical assistance. When a (*Continued on page 72*)

My Past Was Wiped Out and All My Friends Forgotten

I was young and ambitious, happy with my relatives in Cleveland, and engaged to be married. I was planning a new business, and worry taxed my mind. Then came oblivion—my body lived, but my brain was dead! When I became conscious again, the past had been wiped from my mind.

The First Time That I DIED

As Told By HEINRICH MEYER
To MILDRED HARDENBERGH

I WAS a baby, but I was 31 years of age. I had died and I had been born again.

Thirty-one years of age, and I had just learned how to feed myself. I did not know that there were such functions as eating and talking. I could not even prattle as an infant does.

I was a dead man. But I was a child with a full-grown body, through the veins of which the blood flowed healthily. This body, now useless to me, had belonged to the dead man who, when alive, was Heinrich Meyer. I did not know that I carried the dead man around with me, as I had never heard of him. After a while, Dr. Walter Franklin Prince told me about him and I believed what I was told because the facts were proved to me. It was I who had been Heinrich Meyer. Now I was no one. I had died and I was alive again—a thirty-one-year-old baby!

MY first memory of my new life is of my little white room in the County Hospital at San Bernardino, California.

The stalwart body that had housed a dead man and was now controlled by an infant, had managed to propel itself into the San Bernardino police station, on February 20, 1914. It is amazing that the infant found its way unguided to that refuge. For that matter, it had come far, escaping, somehow, the dangers that must have beset its undeveloped personality. It carried in the vest-pocket of an excellent suit of clothes, two marks of identification: the name of Heinrich Meyer and the name of a tailor in Cleveland, Ohio.

By means of those marks, Dr. Prince was enabled to connect the history of the infant that had a man's body, with the history of a person who had disappeared after having written to his sister the following letter:

"Dear Sister and Brother-in-Law:

"Flanked by two persons beside whose revolvers I sleep, and while awake kept constantly under the influence of narcotics. In case my life is worth so much to you, send $200 to the Los Angeles post-office, addressed to me. Please do not notify the police;

I Crossed a Whole Continent Before I Was Born Again

Where was I? Who was I? What was I? These questions were not in words—for I knew no language. I was experiencing the dawn of conciousnese—my new life had begun

otherwise I am lost, for my life is at stake every moment, since on the second of February I had to leave Cleveland under escort and always in danger. We shall arrive there (presumably Los Angeles) in a few days. I am in hopes of ransoming my life in this way. Please do me the favor. Hoping to greet you once again if possible, if you send the money in time by wire. With hearty greeting to you all, perhaps for the last time.

"Your brother-in-law,
"Heinrich Meyer."

THIS astounding document did not contain a single word of truth. The case was not one for the police, but for a medical man or an astute psychiatrist, such as Dr. Prince.

Dr. Prince realized at once that though my former friends were now known, it would be brutal to cast me among them. Heinrich Meyer was gone.

Had I—the new I that was a child—been sent to live among Meyer's relatives and friends, I would have been lost. They would have known me, for the body I bore around with me had Heinrich Meyer's face. But I would not have recognized them. And since I did not know how to eat or to speak, what a burden I would have become to them.

Perhaps never before has an attack of amnesia and aphasia, from which I was suffering, so completely wiped out everything built up during more than thirty years of living.

THE doctor discovered that Heinrich Meyer had been born in Hungary, and that his mother tongue was German. He had come to America when he was twenty-two years old and, being an expert cabinet-maker, had found employment with a Cleveland firm, which made a specialty of fine furniture. He became engaged to a young girl who to this day cannot be convinced that he did not run away to avoid marrying her. Dr. Prince brought to light many other incidents, such as occur in the lives of most normal men.

But all this no longer had anything to do with that person without a name—that person who had been born again at the age of thirty-one.

Of that truth Dr. Prince convinced both my brother-in-law and my sister. He persuaded them how futile, how cruel, it would have been to send me home.

Home? How can one speak of the home of a man, thirty-one years old, who knows no one in the world, who does not recognize a house, a tree, a chair, a slice of bread, a human being, when he sees them? My family, after receiving my strange letter, had been certain I had been murdered. Relieved to find I was still living, though as a changed personality, they acceded to Dr. Prince's suggestion that I remain in San Bernardino, and

there begin to live all over again.

For I had retained my motor memories and by means of these, the doctor hoped to build up a new existence for me. Without his great patience and loyal friendship, I would probably be a misunderstood derelict today, an inmate of some asylum for the insane, or—dead.

As Dr. Prince progressed with his treatments, and I regained various faculties, I perceived that the patience the doctor expended upon me, was such as he would have shown to a child. He would often lay his hand gently on my head, or, when he was explaining something to me, turn my face toward his.

He pitied me. The first time he saw me I was sitting on the edge of the bed, in the hospital. He addressed me, and I did not answer. I did not understand a word he said. I knew no English, no Hungarian, no German. Dr. Prince decided to begin the colossal task of recreating a human being.

He succeeded in teaching me after some months to speak, to eat, to recognize common objects, to think.

IN about a year, due to his constant efforts, the new man whom Dr. Prince had created out of the rudimentary being that had stumbled into the hospital, was able to lead a complex and normal life of his own.

I became James Matthews. The hospital authorities gave me that name, and it was as serviceable as any other.

One night, at a time when I was living normally except for the fact that I had no recollection of the past outside of the recent one, I had a dream of peculiar significance.

I saw myself in a lofty hall, with walls of a light color. I was seated at a desk to the right of three other men on a platform. There were, I thought, two or three hundred men sitting in the hall. One by one they came to my desk, handed me a slip of paper and passed on, after I had made an entry in a little book.

When all had given me their slips, I rose from my desk and went to the edge of the platform, where I delivered a harangue. Each moment I grew more excited. Suddenly, I pointed a finger at a large, red-faced, mean-looking man, and shouted:

"You are a thief!"

The man roared back at me:

"You're a liar!"

About twenty others shouted at me:

"You don't know what you're talking about!"

Then I turned to my desk, took up a big book and turned the leaves. At the top of each page was the name of a man, and beneath, the amount each had paid in. I asserted the red-faced man had failed to account for four hundred and seventy dollars. (It seems he was my predecessor in the position I now occupied—that of treasurer.)

What happened thereafter is not clear to me. I was aware that the big man was making overt threats, and that I had put myself in a dangerous position.

What I had seen in my dream was the scene of a labor union meeting. That was a bit out of the life of Heinrich Meyer. In Cleveland, Meyer had been treasurer of a union. The episode I saw in my dream was substantially true, I found out later. I related the dream to Dr. Prince.

"I still have," he said, "the letter you wrote to your sister."

I must interrupt at this point to try to make clear to you my reaction to this, and other references to my former life. On this occasion, I said to myself: "Dr. Prince says I have a sister. He is an honest man and my friend, and I can't doubt his word. So I must have a sister. Dr. Prince says I was a cabinet-maker in Cleveland. As far as I personally know, I have never been in Cleveland, but I shall take his word for it.

"Dr. Prince speaks of a letter written by a man named Heinrich Meyer, and he declares that I am, or was, that man. Well, perhaps. I have no proof to the contrary."

My emotions were not stirred by these references. I was content with the life of James Matthews in San Bernardino, and not interested in the career of a man called Heinrich Meyer, of Cleveland.

"I think it might interest you to hear my analysis of the letter's meaning," Dr. Prince continued. "Your dream has a bearing upon it."

I was quite ready to listen, and Dr. Prince went on:

"I LEARNED from your sister that when you were about fifteen years old you became overheated one hot day and then drank ice-cold water. There followed what your sister describes as 'some sort of an attack.' When you were twenty-four, you suffered a similar 'attack' from exactly the same cause.

"The first attack lasted several hours, while the second one kept you unconscious for several days.

"From boyhood, then, you were subject to strange reactions. A shock, physical or psychic, was enough to throw you off your mental balance.

"Just before you disappeared from Cleveland, you were preparing to marry a girl named Rose Schneider. You were planning to establish yourself in business for yourself, making furniture to order. You had told your brother-in-law that you were tired of working for others.

"But you had no capital. So you asked two men to become your partners. Both men had agreed to do so, then backed out at the last moment. You became despondent.

"In fact, you were so depressed that you wrote to a friend in New York, saying you saw only one way out of the difficulty—to shoot yourself. Your friend immediately wrote you seeking to dissuade you from anything so rash. He succeeded in cheering you up.

"HEINRICH MEYER"

Heinrich Meyer is the pseudonym of a man who experienced the lapse of his primary consciousness and the rise of a secondary personality. Neither of his actual names—present or former—is given in this story, as he is now a successful business man and he does not want his associates to know of his strange case.

The letters and other documents through which the facts of his amazing career were established, together with newspaper clippings and photographs of the case, as well as specimens of the first attempts by Meyer to write after he was re-born and christened Joseph Matthews, are preserved in the archives of the American Society for Psychical Research. There, too, can be found the original diary which Matthews kept after his child-like self had learned to write.

"With every intention of visiting your sister in Connecticut, you obtained a leave of absence from your factory foreman, left your tools, papers and personal effects in the best of order, set out from Cleveland, and—reached San Bernardino.

"You wrote to your sister. Your letter was wild, mad. Were you intentionally deceiving her? Absolutely not! And now, we'll try to read some meaning into your jargon about abductors, revolvers, ransom, danger and narcotics."

Dr. Prince unlocked a small steel cabinet on top of his desk, and produced a letter. Was it mine? I recognized neither the paper nor the signature. He placed it on a table, and together we bent over it.

"I have come to these conclusions," Dr. Prince said.

"The hysteria and ultimate loss of your primary personality were due principally to some financial loss or worry. Note that in the letter money is the dominant theme. You spoke of ransom, of two hundred dollars. Then recollect that two men had promised to enter business with you, one of them as a financial backer, and that they had withdrawn from the plan, leaving you in a morbid and hopeless state of mind.

"A REVOLVER had in some way figured recently in your life. I am sure you had never slept beside the revolvers of two persons, as your letter so wildly states, and no revolver had ever actually been pointed at your head. But you had threatened to shoot yourself, hadn't you? Figuratively, you had pointed a weapon at your own head.

"You had had, at some recent period, apprehensions of bodily harm coming to you, perhaps in the shape of death through human violence. Note here such expressions as, 'in case my life is worth so much to you,' 'otherwise I am lost,' 'always in danger,' etc. Now think of last night's dream. It was that fellow at the union meeting whom you feared.

"From the beginning of the attack you had a feeling that your brain was befogged, stunned, dazed. Note the expressions, 'while kept awake, constantly under the influence of narcotics'."

Dr. Prince lifted his head, a little proud of his feat, and smiled.

I had found his analysis interesting, but I could scarcely keep from laughing at my good friend. Beyond that day when I had found myself in the San Bernardino hospital, I recalled nothing. All this talk of Heinrich Meyer, of a sister, a fiancée, financial worries—what did it mean to me? Nothing.

But I was ready to humor the doctor, for I had no difficulty in recollecting his extraordinary kindness to me. I knew well enough that he had made me into the successful and happy James Matthews who in less than five years had become one of the most respected members of the community.

Nevertheless, when I left Dr. Prince, I took away with me a strange sense of fear, as though I had a foreboding of evil. I could not assign any reason for this feeling. It persisted for several days. I was sure it had been aroused by something the doctor had said, but just what that was I could not imagine. I went about like a haunted man.

I recognized the tools of my former trade. Their use was familiar; yet I could not name them, nor was I positive that I had ever seen them before

A dozen times a day, I would look suddenly over my shoulder. Had not some one in back of me beckoned to me? Some one I did not recognize? But why? The man—the shadow—whatever it was—seemed to want me to go somewhere. But I wanted to remain where I was. Yet I had a dread that the shadow would tear me away.

AFTER having been transformed by Dr. Prince from a helpless infant into a rational man, I had earned a living at more or less menial jobs. Indeed, the dead Heinrich Meyer, who had owned my body, did me one favor. My first job was in a carpenter's shop, and the dead man's hands—or, to put it more scientifically, my motor memories—guided my own so they were almost as skillful in handling tools as those of Meyer in Cleveland.

New ambitions soon awoke in me. I had no inclination to remain a cabinet-maker. I drifted about for a while, and then took advantage of the chances San Bernardino offered for the development of real estate. It was real estate that made James Matthews prosperous.

Furthermore, I had fallen in love with Madeline Clair, a charming young woman. I knew she returned my feelings, and though nothing was (*Continued on page* 82)

Here at Last Is the Gripping Truth About

The Mad Mystic

What was the secret power of Rasputin who ruled an Emperor's throne and tried to be a saint through sin?

We were traveling through Siberian wilds. Snow had begun to fall. The sledge stopped suddenly, and terror gripped me; for out of the gloom rose the forms of two huge men!

WE reached Russia—that is to say, we reached St. Petersburg—on New Year's Day of 1890. I was still a young girl of thirteen years, but I remember it well.

Father met us at the railroad station—a great, big man in a bearskin coat and bearskin hat. His beard had grown rough and bushy like a Russian's, and he astonished us by speaking Russian to our coachman. We hardly knew him. Indeed we were only just beginning to get used to him when he departed a week later to return to the mines in Siberia of which he had charge. Mother pleaded to go with him but father shook his head with great positiveness.

"Why, even the Russians themselves wouldn't risk going where our mines are. Only the Siberian peasants can stand it. For women such as you and Greggy (my name was Alice Gregory Stafford but father and mother called me Greggy) it would be absolutely impossible."

"But there *are* women there," mother protested. "Where other women can live, we can live—even if they are peasants." But father shook his head grimly.

"You don't understand," he said. "That country is savage and treacherous for high-bred women. I couldn't let you." And that ended the matter apparently, for mother knew it was useless to protest when father spoke in that tone. But when a year later, instead of father's returning to us for Christmas, we got a letter from him saying that he was lying ill up in the frozen mountains where the mine was situated, mother did not hesitate, but promptly packed up our things, hired a guide and interpreter who was himself from Siberia, and started out on the long and tiresome journey over the endless Russian railways on which the trains were frequently twenty-four and even forty-eight hours late. This was done contrary to the advice of our American consul and the expostulations of our Russian friends.

"But we speak Russian now," mother said firmly. "Greggy speaks it very well. Where other women can go, we can go."

The trains couldn't get us to where father was, however. Between the nearest railway station and him lay four hundred miles of great swamp lands that were all but impassable except in the frozen winter. In the midst of these swamps were little lost villages, most of them colonized by criminals years before at the imperial command of Catherine the Great of Russia.

OUR guide, Alexander Stefanovich, who was a peasant himself by birth, warned us never to show our hands with jewelry on them, never to take out a purse, never to show our faces more than necessary.

"These Siberian people, they are rough," he said. "They don't see delicate gentle-ladies like you much. They live by stealing. Keep close to me. Don't speak. Let me do everything."

"We are not afraid, Stefanovich," mother answered. "Rough people are not always bad people, and we will do nothing to make them angry."

"Well, I shall stay always near," he said with a shake of his big, shaggy head. "You Americans are too trusting. If you were Russian women you would know

and the American Beauty

As told by ALICE GREGORY STAFFORD
To FRANKLIN HOLT

Mysterious stars linked together the destinies of the beautiful Alice Gregory Stafford, an American girl, and this strange Svengali of the Steppes

I struggled frantically, crying out to mother. Then he lifted me from the ground and carried me through the snow—away from the road

It was all a wonderful adventure to me, especially after we had come to the end of the railroad and begun our journey by sledge. I loved to be tucked into the sledge with great bearskin robes, our top-coats pulled up around our ears, just a peep-hole for our eyes to look out from. And Stefanovich would always see to it that at the beginning of a day's ride there was a heated soapstone to put at our feet. Then off we set to the jingle of bells and the creak of the sled runners on hard, dry snow. Our sturdy Siberian ponies would trot on and on, and we would get out at every available village to change horses and postilions. Towns were often thirty miles apart, however, and then we knew the meaning of cold and cramped limbs.

better. You wouldn't even let *me* know that you carry great rolls of money and jewelry that would keep me rich for years if I should decide to rob you." His English was very strange sometimes but he always managed to make us understand. He shrugged his shoulders now and gestured with his hands, his coarse but simple face turned on us with an expression that told us how really childlike and helpless we were.

"WHAT do you know about me? Do you think any but American women would travel through Siberia with me not knowing me any more than you do? Siberia, the rough land where murder is done as easily as spitting." But mother just laughed at him.

"Stefanovich, you can't frighten us."

"I don't want to frighten you. I want to make you careful."

"All right. We will be careful."

WE learned to drink tea in those days and to realize why the Russians prized it. At the end of a long, cold drive it was a moment of keen pleasure to step into the rude wayside houses and have the samovar brought in. The hot tea seemed to enter our blood and go coursing through us, bringing new life. Stefanovich drank literally quarts of it—and munched big pieces of dark peasant bread.

"I remember this bread from when I was a boy. A good many years ago," he added wistfully. "Tomorrow we enter the province of Tobolsk. It is where I was

born but I must tell you that it is the worst territory we have to go through. You will stay very close to me. I should like to get through it in one day, but we shall have to pass the night somewhere in the district of Tumen—perhaps at Pokrovskoie. Pokrovskoie is my village." His blue eyes lifted to us and he looked happy. "My old mother is there. But it is a bad town. You ladies shall not go alone anywhere—and at night I shall sleep at your door."

"Stefanovich," mother laughed, "when will you stop trying to frighten us? These are your own people. You should be ashamed to talk so of them."

"It is because they *are* my own people that I know them," was his grim answer. "Me, I was not always too honest, either. I have felt the *knout* for stealing. If I do not steal from you—" he paused and his rather close-set eyes regarded us with a puzzled expression, "well, it is because perhaps you are different. You are kind—and helpless like children. You trust everyone."

THAT night I awoke screaming from a terrible nightmare. Mother started to comfort me when there came a sharp rap on the door. Then the anxious voice of Stefanovich demanding to know what was wrong. His relief was great when he heard that it was only a bad dream.

"I feared worse," he muttered.

"Are you really sleeping at our door, Stefanovich?" mother demanded.

"Of a certainty I am. Rest tranquil."

Next morning when we arose there was a cloudy sky. Toward nightfall it began to snow with big, soft flakes that fell densely. Our little ponies were soon white. It fell in our robed laps in fluffy piles. Ten yards ahead of the ponies we could see nothing.

"We are almost at Pokrovskoie," Stefanovich told us.

He had scarcely spoken when two huge men rose up out of the snow where they had squatted concealed, and each seized a pony by the bridle. The snow fell so thick that I could scarcely see anything but big, blurred shapes. Stefanovich and our postilion, however, evidently knew the meaning of the apparition for their hands went up into the air.

"Drop your purses to the floor and kick them under the robes with your rings, if you can," Stefanovich whispered in English. "These men are robbers. Whatever they ask, you must do. Don't resist, for they would kill us if they thought necessary." His voice shook, and I knew he was afraid. His fear caught hold of me too, then, but I did what he said, dropping my purse to the floor of the sledge.

The two men advanced from the horses' heads. One of them struck our postilion over the head with the butt of his heavy gun, and the man toppled to the road almost under the horses. Stefanovich spoke then.

"It is not necessary to use the guns," he said. "We shall offer no resistance. We have little money, but such as there is I will give you. This is my wife and daughter and we are returning to my people here in Pokrovskoie. I am Alexander Stefanovich."

"Ah! Alexander Stefanovich! Well met!" said one of the men fiercely. He thrust his face forward and Stefanovich gave a cry of fear.

"Oh God! The *rasputnik!*"

Then the man struck Stefanovich a sudden blow that made him fall backward against the seat of the sledge in a limp heap.

THE man laughed in his throat and stepped closer to me, who sat on his side of the sledge. He thrust his face into mine and with his gloved hands reached up and pulled aside the coat collar that hid my face.

He had a ragged beard of reddish tint, and his features were big, the cheekbones high and prominent. He stared at me from gray eyes that were partly concealed beneath heavy lids. Bold, penetrating eyes. At sight of my face, the heavy lids opened suddenly and I felt a terrible sort of fear.

"I like thy looks, girl!" he said. "Get out!"

"No, no!" I cried, and tried to cling to mother, but the man put a huge hand on the robe and flung it off me, and then pulled me out. The man on the other side was demanding of mother where her jewels were. Then he made her get out and I heard her scream. The scream was cut off and I was snatched simultaneously into the arms of the red-bearded ruffian. His face pressed down under my hat and I felt the heat of his breath. I struggled frantically, crying out to mother. The arms held me closer, smothering me. I felt myself lifted from the

RASPUTIN—Who was he? What was he? Why out of Russia's millions did this one peasant rise to rule a Czar? On what were his powers based? The answers to these questions make a story more exciting and daring than any novel. They are told here for the first time by one who fought against his mighty spell.

ground and carried through the snow away from the road and the sledge.

I called to Stefanovich but there was no answer. Then a rough log shelter appeared and I saw two wild-looking Siberian dogs tied to its entrance. The man spoke to them and they slunk to one side. Then he pushed the door open and carried me in. There was a rough table and rougher chairs and a queer mud stove of crude construction.

"So you are the daughter of Alexander Stefanovich. Well, I don't like your father. How old are you?"

"I am fourteen," I told him, trembling, "but I am not Stefanovich's daughter. I am an American girl."

"Maybe you are Stefanovich's daughter and are lying to me. Anyway it is all the same to me. You are a good age, and now I have brought you here. Take off your coat! I want to see you." He went back to the door and fastened it shut with a strip of hide. When he turned around and found that I had not taken off my coat, his big sensuous-lipped mouth spread into a smile. "You won't take it off? Then I will take it off for you." He bent his heavy-lidded eyes on me with an intentness that almost petrified me with fright. I could feel my poor young heart hammering against my ribs.

He stripped off his heavy gloves, exposing hands whose backs were covered with reddish hair. The fingernails were long and dirty. Then he stared at me again and the eyelids sprang open, the gray eyes underneath bright with lust. Then he stepped close and with a swift, violent movement tore off my fur coat. His hairy hands seized my body and pulled me against him.

THE two dogs who had been chained to the outside of the cabin began suddenly to bark and snarl. The man loosened his hold on me and snatched up his gun, his cheeks paling. He spoke to the dogs and they barked louder and more ferociously.

There came the sound of feet crunching the snow. Then a rap on the door; but the big man made no sound. I saw his eyes roving about the room. Then whoever was at the door tried to push it open, but the leather thong held it.

"Help!" I screamed.

The next instant the ruffian struck me a blow that knocked me to the floor. Outside there was the sound of a gunshot, of snarling dogs, of pounding on the door. The room was empty. The man had escaped by a window. The door was opened and three Cossacks stood there, one of them an officer. They looked at me in surprise and marched into the cabin with leveled guns.

"Where is the man?" the young officer questioned.

"He escaped by the window."

The two soldiers at once began rummaging the cabin, but the officer looked at me. He saluted, bowing courteously from the hips and clicking his heels.

"That was your sledge on the road?" His handsome eyes met mine and I thought I had never seen so good-looking a man.

"Yes," I answered.

"AND you? Have you been hurt?" he demanded solicitously.

"You came in time," I told him, dropping my eyes.

"I thank God for that!" He picked up my overcoat from the floor and helped me into it. "Did he steal anything?"

"I kicked my purse and rings under the sledge robes. Where is my mother?"

"I did not see her."

At that monent there were two simultaneous gunshots and we turned to see the two Cossack soldiers standing over the prostrate dogs, their guns still smoking, grins of satisfaction on their savage faces. They had deliberately shot the poor creatures. I saw an angry red

(*Continued on page 79*)

"Where is the man?" the young officer questioned. "Have you been hurt?"

I Had a Fortune

The *Fall of Icarus* was the masterpiece of Pincini, the greatest of all tattooers. I thought it belonged to me; but learned that I belonged to it!

By Peter Durvant
As told to Kenneth Holmes

I AM a martyr to art. I have lived with art. For I, myself, am a great work of art.

Nature did not make me a Greek god. But by one of those inexplicable twists of fate, I have become a masterpiece.

It may sound uncanny to say that I do not belong to myself, but nevertheless that is a fact. Plain and normal I may appear to you, but I am in reality a piece of valuable national property, as rare and priceless as the famous paintings of the masters in the art galleries that have lived down through the ages.

And if that is not enough, I am, in addition, a prisoner. Yet, I have committed no crime. I have broken no law. I have harmed no one. Strange as it may sound, here I am, a sane and law-abiding citizen, residing in a civilized country and still a captive.

I cannot do as I choose, for I do not belong to myself. I am guarded like a convict and watched like a costly painting. The only difference between me and the rare pictures in a salon is that, despite the fact that I am treated like a culprit, I am—thank God—still unhung.

What if no bars surround me, if at certain hours I can walk the streets? I am not free. I cannot go abroad into the open country; I cannot return to my native land; I

on My Back

They Called Me a Work of Art and Wouldn't Let Me Out of the Country. What Good Was this Wealth that I Could Neither Lose nor Spend?

cannot, for the space of a single day, go where I will. Always, there is a shadow upon me. Little children point me out in the streets as I go by and their elders tell my story to tourists and strangers in the town.

A more impossible, more tantalizing or intriguing predicament than mine, I cannot imagine. It all came about because I loved art.

My love of art was inherited from my grandfather. By profession a sign painter, he used to vary the monotony of his work by doing delicate and exquisite miniatures. His tiny sketches were little masterpieces that delighted the world, but it would have been better for me if he had stuck to posters.

Until I was thirty years old, I was innocent of art. A native of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, I left my home at that age, to travel for a Paris firm, Reddin Freres. The cities, with their vast store of art treasures, seemed to me like paradise after the quiet and dullness of a small village. All my spare moments I spent in the museums, in the galleries, in the ancient villas and cathedrals and palaces, everywhere gorging myself on this splendid feast of art.

THE wonder and glory of past centuries seemed inexhaustable. Perhaps, though, like too many sweets, it spoiled me. Certainly, it left me bewildered. If I had only known then—but let me get on with my story.

In the middle of May, 1923, I was staying in a small town. Business had been good, and I was feeling cheerful. Then, one day I received a letter from the notary in my home town. He informed me that my uncle, Jean Deplis Durvant, had died recently, and that, since there were no other heirs, his modest fortune of ten thousand francs was mine.

The legacy was soon in my hands. One of the first things I did was to arrange a party for my fellow guests at the inn where I was staying. The table was heaped with the best of foods, and in tall goblets, there sparkled the effervescence of champagne. Gay though it was, the celebration did not satisfy my desire for a real commemoration of the event.

I wanted something else, something more tangible. I felt an urge for something lasting in which to invest my funds. It occurred to me that some fine piece of art might satisfy me. For a long time I haunted shops and museums, in various cities, searching for a particular painting or sculpture that would please me. After the multitude of art objects I had seen, nothing appealed to me strongly, and it was indeed hard for me to make up my mind.

I had almost given up the idea of purchasing a painting, when I chanced upon an old man outside of a famous museum. We began a conversation about paintings, and he revealed an expert knowledge of them. Finally, my new friend introduced himself as Andreas Pincini.

Pincini! I knew well who he was. Throughout southern Europe, Pincini was famed as a tattoo expert, noted for his superb artistry, for his exquisite skill. Overjoyed to meet so fine and distinguished an artist, shook his hand fervently.

Upon questioning, Pincini reluctantly admitted that like most geniuses, he was having a difficult time making a livelihood. I was filled with pity at this great man's plight. I felt sorry for him. I wondered if there wasn't something I could do to help him.

Like an inspiration, a thought flashed through my mind. It seemed like a miracle. At last I had found it! At last, I knew what I wanted as a fitting and permanent souvenir of my legacy!

"Sir," I pleaded, "Sir, You have it in your power to do me a great service. I beg of you, please consider this. I will pay you all I have for this favor, for this exercise of your remarkable talent. I am not rich. All that I have is five thousand francs. It shall be yours."

"I do not understand," explained Pincini. "Five thousand frances—five thousand francs for what?"

"Don't think this the request of a madman," I begged. "Sir, you are one of the world's finest craftsmen. Would you not want to create a work that will be a labor of love, something that will be a personal gift to me, so that I may always own an example of your renowned artistry?"

"What?" he demanded. "What is it you want of me?"

"Will you," I begged, "do me the great honor of painting one of your masterpieces on my unworthy back?"

Pincini was amazed, but his need of money made him agree to my plan. First, however, he made a careful inspection of my back and found it ideal as a canvas for his best effort. My back was soft and healthy, with thick skin. Then it looked no different from most other backs. How often since have I wished I had it back again.

THE sum I had offered for the work was small, but here was a chance of doing something on a larger scale than he usually did. It was an opportunity to create, unhampered, a masterpiece in his medium. As long as I lived, it would be mine, mine alone. So, at least, I thought.

Many think tattooing is practiced only by gypsies and Chinamen, that it is done solely on the wrists and arms of sailors. Pincini was no ordinary tattooist. He was far above such petty decorations. His skill ranked above that of ordinary tattooers as the art of a mural painter does above that of a mere pavement chalk artist. He was every inch a craftsman.

The first step was the choice of a subject. Pincini picked as the topic for his painting the story of the fall of Icarus. According to the Greek legend, Icarus, the son of Daedalus, the artificer, made wings that he fashioned with wax, and while flying, came too near the sun. The wax melted and he fell to earth. The crash of his fall was no greater than mine was to be.

The picture I arranged for was to cover my whole back, to stretch from my shoulders (*Continued on page 77*)

He Was the American Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. His Good and Bad Natures Were Constantly at War

Two Spirits

By ALAN HYND

In the early morning, Keller entered a cab, still carrying the mysterious bag. The evil half of his dual nature was plotting the greatest crime of his career

THERE is no stranger case given in the whole history of crime than that of Edward Keller. He was two men in one—a good man and a bad man joined together forever, and forever at war. He was the living authentic image of Robert Louis Stevenson's fiction character, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

One half of Keller wanted to be a good, kind, honest man. The other half wanted to be cruel, to lie, rob and murder. One Keller was generous with a fine sense of gratitude. The other Keller was a selfish ingrate and heartless brute.

In a conflict of this sort, which side would triumph? The record of Edward Keller's crimes answers that question. He broke every law of man and God, and yet his strange, horrible history shows just at the end, a flash of something that may after all indicate the deathless power of the instincts that fight for truth and justice.

Think how you yourself would feel if you carried in your heart a devil that fought against every decent act of your life. Imagine the turmoil and the suffering you would endure. That was what Keller went through. He wanted to be good—and he couldn't. He had ideals, and the devil in him destroyed them. He wanted love and children and a home, but the fiend that drove him robbed him of these precious things.

And remember, this is the true story of a man, the record of whose life and crimes is open to anyone who cares to read it. It is strange, frightful, baffling, but it is absolutely true. He can only be understood if you remember that Keller was two men in one, and the bad half ruled him.

IT was no mere fancy that led to the discovery of the similarity between Keller and Stevenson's immortal villain. Years after Keller had launched on his career of crime—even after he had met with his first defeat at the hands of the law—it was discovered that a "second man" dominated him. Dr. Herbert M. Goddard, Philadelphia physician and student of criminology, and Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Eastern Penitentiary, became interested in Eddie Keller's case. It was he who saw the Dr. Jekyll and the Mr. Hyde in Keller.

It was a most astounding thing that Dr. Goddard saw in Keller's face. One side, the right, presented the pious expression of a man at peace with God and his fellow creatures. The right eye was that of an idealist, a dreamer, a kind and noble man. The right side of the mouth indicated the generous, honest, truth-loving soul. But the left side of Keller's face was marked with the secret of his cruel and brutal nature. The baser passions were traced in the twisted left eyebrow, the curling, contorted left side of the mouth. The glint in the left eye was criminal; the look in it hard and cruel.

Dr. Goddard was a humanitarian as well as a criminologist. He found in Keller an unusual case, and at once treated him individually. Keller was an absorbing subject for Goddard's researches, and so doctor and thief often met in the prison cell. Gradually Keller unfolded his strange story before Dr. Goddard. The details bore the imprint of truth. But behind Keller's facts there lurked the design to distort, the attempt to make alibis and apologies for misdeeds. Not until later was the full truth about Keller revealed. This is his real story.

Edward Keller had bridged the period between childhood and adolescence without giving the least sign of his dual personality. Maturity came to him by normal stages, and it wasn't until he was in his early twenties

Fierce Warred within His Soul

Dr. Herbert Goddard understood Keller. He believed that Keller's better personality could be made to triumph. Yet he was the man whom Keller marked for doom!

that the "second man" within him, his evil self, began to manifest itself.

It is one of the grotesque ironies of Keller's life that his first real criminal urge overpowered him while he was serving as a member of the New York City Fire Department in 1904, when he had just passed his twenty-first year. Little was known of his background or antecedents. He had met the main requirements of the department and shown himself to be of a type which makes brave firefighters.

HIS courage while a fireman was soon recognized. He was admired by his associates and his officers. A veritable smoke-eater, Keller startled everyone by his fearlessness. No conflagration, no crumbling building ever halted him as he tried to save human lives. The right side of Keller's face was ruling his destiny!

When Keller had been in the department for almost a year, he was entrusted with the care of the funds of the Firemen's Benevolent Association. The funds were large, and were devoted solely to alleviate hardship among dependents of firemen who had lost their lives in the line of duty. For a while Keller administered the fund intelligently and with a scrupulousness that left no room for suspicion. But the evil so long dormant within him began to assert itself.

One morning Keller failed to report for duty. His chief, concerned about the young fellow whom he regarded as his protegé, called Keller's boarding house to inquire whether he was ill and needed aid.

"Mr. Keller ain't livin' here no more," said a cracked, feminine voice over the wire. "He packed up and left last night. Said he was goin' on a long trip."

At once there flashed through the chief's mind the thought that Keller had been custodian of the Firemen's Fund. It was difficult to believe that this clean-cut young man, one of the most intrepid of fire-fighters, could be guilty of wrongdoing. But a careful examination of the Association's books revealed a shortage of several thousand dollars.

The left side of Keller's face was dominating him!

A police dragnet was spread for Keller and inside of twenty-four hours he was arrested and placed in jail. Keller admitted the theft of the money which was destined for orphans and widows, and told where most of it was hid. After a quick trial, Keller was found guilty, and sentenced to six years imprisonment in Sing-Sing.

Unlike the majority of habitual criminals, Keller after his release did not return to old criminal haunts or habits. Such was the strange nature of his dual make-up that immediately on being set free, he picked up the threads of his normal existence despite the stain on his past. He was unconscious of the diabolical surging within him.

KELLER turned up in Philadelphia, in 1913, part owner of a store in one of the outlying manufacturing districts. Edward F. Keller and Daniel J. McNicol Trunk Manufacturers, was the sign on the window of the prosperous store. Just how Keller met McNicol and what led up to the partnership, has never been ascertained. The two men shared the business equally, and developed a strong friendship for one another.

For a time, all went smoothly in Keller's life. One morning, on March 30, 1914, Daniel J. McNicol vanished mysteriously. He had left his home shortly before nine o'clock for his place of business, according to his wife.

"That's mighty strange," said Keller, who had gone to notify his partner's wife when McNicol failed to show up that morning. "I've been at the office for two hours—

since about nine o'clock—and I haven't seen Dan. I thought perhaps he was sick."

Keller notified the police of McNicol's disappearance and a city-wide search was immediately ordered. As a matter of police routine, the books of the trunk concern were carefully examined, but nothing suspicious was discovered. The company was found to be in a prosperous condition thus eliminating the theory that McNicol had committed suicide on account of financial difficulties.

The search was extended to other cities and at the end of a month, the authorities frankly admitted that they were as baffled as ever by the mystery of McNicol's disappearance.

ONE night, about six weeks after McNicol had vanished, Keller called on Mrs. McNicol. She was an attractive woman in her thirties, and had been devoted to her husband.

"I have good—and bad—news for you, Mrs. McNicol," Keller blandly said to the grief-stricken woman. "If I tell you, I want you to promise not to breath a word of it to anybody or we will both get into serious trouble."

In reply to an anxious look in her eye and an inaudible acquiescence to his demand for secrecy, Keller continued:

"I received a letter from Dan this morning. . . ."

Mrs. McNicol was startled.

"He is in good health," Keller went on, "so don't worry. He is in Boston. He writes me that he left town because he understood the police were after him for a minor offense which he committed years ago—before he married you. He doesn't say what it was. He merely states that he suddenly received a tip-off that the 'dicks' were on his trail. Now then—"

"Where's the letter?" interrupted the woman.

"Oh, I burned it as soon as I read it, because if it were found the police would know just where to grab Dan. . . . Incidentally, Dan wanted me to tell you that he needs cash—a few hundred dollars—to see him through until this thing blows over.

"I jotted his address down on a piece of paper," said Keller, fumbling through his pockets but apparently unable to find anything. "I must have left it at the office. Oh, well, you can give me the money and *I'll* send it."

MRS. McNICOL, impressed by the story and filled anxiety for her fugitive husband, wrote out a check and handed it to Keller. As she did so, she remarked:

"Isn't it funny that Dan didn't write to me and ask me for the money? He could at least have notified me of his plight."

Keller, astute and cunning whenever he was plotting, answered reassuringly:

"Not at all. Dan said he didn't want to communicate with you direct because he suspected that the postal authorities were probably censoring your mail."

Keller left the bewildered Mrs. McNicol with assur-

In the Eastern Penitentiary, in Philadelphia, Keller met Miss Flannagan. She, too, believed in him and they were married on the day he left the prison

ances that he would forward the money to her husband.

During the year that followed, Keller was a frequent visitor to the home of Mrs. McNicol. It was Mr. Hyde, really, coming in the guise of the benevolent Dr. Jekyll to offer consolation to his victim. But each visit had for its object some form of extortion. Chiefly, Keller sought money—more money for the fugitive husband who languished in some distant city, evading justice and punishment.

When Mrs. McNicol met his reqests for money with desperate pleas for information about her Dan and pressed him for evidence, he would parry her pleas with shrewd and cunning alibis.

Finally, broken in spirit though suspicions, and despairing of ever seeing her husband alive, Mrs. McNicol defied Keller. She refused to accept his vague information about Dan any longer and finally accused him of lying to her regarding her husband's whereabouts. She charged him with pocketing the money which she gave him.

Keller did not flinch at such allegations. He feigned an attitude of righteous indignation.

Edward Keller was a man of double personality. His Rogues Gallery photograph graphically portrays the dual characteristics of his mysterious nature

"IF *that's* the way you feel about it—if that's the way you treat me after all I have done for you, *all right!*" he said. "I shall stop seeing you." He ceased his visits thereafter.

The interlude that followed also was a strange one. Again the complex personality of the man was showing itself. That part of the incongruous compound known affectionately and familiarly as "Eddie" Keller and which had nothing in common with that other being, Edward F. Keller, *fell in love*. A romance had budded and blossomed in a soul for which the Devil had bartered. Keller courted and won an attractive girl, marrying her after an unusually ardent courtship.

It might be added here that on the emotional side, Keller was a man with a flair for the conquest of feminine hearts. Like the late Gerald Chapman, the arch-criminal, Keller was known as something of a ladies man. He was not exactly handsome, but his debonair manner was winning. And then, there was that right profile of his, with its frank and kindly expression.

With marriage came another metamorphosis in Keller's life. The trunk manufacturing business, which he had conducted single-handed after McNicol's disappearance, foundered on the shoals of mismanagement and neglect. He decided to go into the laundry business in another part of the town and abandoned the trunk establishment, removing only a few personal effects from the place.

More than a year and a half after McNicol had vanished—on December 15, 1915—Philadelphia was startled by a mystery. A number of workmen had gone to the building formerly occupied by Keller and McNicol for the purposes of installing a new heating system. They had to dig into the dirt base of the cellar to lay a foundation for the furnace, when then the shovels and picks had penetrated the earth for about three feet, one workman's shovel struck something hard. He continued to dig and gradually uncovered a trunk.

"Look" exclaimed the laborer, calling to the other workers. "Here's one o' them there treasure chests you read about."

EAGER hands reached for the trunk and finally dragged it to the surface. The men were nearly overcome by the overpowering odors emanating from the trunk. When they had ripped open the lid, they were horror-struck at seeing the disintegrated body of a man.

The police and detectives who arrived later soon concluded that the body in the trunk was that of McNicol. Immediately identification, however, was not feasible. All traces of identity had been removed from the body and the clothes.

The investigation that followed naturally led to inquiries regarding the erstwhile partner of McNicol—Edward F. Keller, the respectable, married man, engaged in the laundry business in town. Keller was quizzed, but coolly told the authorities he doubted that the body found in the trunk was that of McNicol.

Keller cunningly distracted the sleuths by asserting that he had been in communication with McNicol who, he said, had voluntarily left town in order to rid himself of Mrs. McNicol, whom he had ceased to love.

The trail then led to Mrs. McNicol. She told the police the story of Keller's visits to her after her husband's disappearance and how she had given Keller money to be sent to her husband. That was news to the police of Philadelphia. The vast machinery of the Detective Bureau was brought into play and revealed that Dan McNicol had never been sought by the police—at least not under that name. In addition, Mrs. McNicol bared the story of her private life with her husband and showed, that they had lived happily together to the very day of his vanishing.

The net was closing around Keller. Suspicion pointed directly at him. It pointed to the Mr. Hyde so indelibly chiseled on the left side of his face.

But what about identification of the body supposedly McNicol's.

That mystery was taxing the keenest minds of the Police Department. A few weeks later, a smart detective working on the solitary clue which the body yielded—the bridge-work in the mouth—found the dentist who had had McNicol as patient. He identified the false teeth as those he had made for McNicol (*Continued on page* 69)

The Love

As told by HUGO LEIBNITZ

The Crown Prince Paid the Big Price for the Girl of His Choice

The love of Rudolph and Mary began on the night of their first meeting

SINCE 1889, the world at large has speculated on the famous love affair of Crown Prince Rudolph and Mary Vetsera, and its tragic end which shook Europe to its foundation. Rudolph, the only son of Francis Joseph, the proud Emperor of Austria and Hungary, master of millions of people, was found dead with his love lying lifeless beside him.

The world did not know this—that Mary Vetsera too was found dead with her royal lover. They believed some catastrophe overtook her later.

In other European countries conjecture ran rife among those of the people who had heard of the "suicide." In Austria, however, one was not even permitted to speculate. Anybody heard discussing the matter was likely to find himself in jail facing a long sentence.

It is inconceivable that a whole country should have been held to so gigantic a conspiracy of silence. Yet such was the case, due to the power of the Secret Police, who could not only control people's tongues, but the newspapers as well.

IN a way perhaps this enforced silence was best. There were few people acquainted with the truth, and such a tissue of lies was woven from the very start, by those who merely had suspicions to guide them, that no good could have come of indiscriminate talk.

Those who knew the real state of affairs, and I was one of them, were sworn to secrecy. Now that the principal figures connected with the tragedy are dead, now that the once glorious empire has crumpled and been replaced by a young republic, I believe no one will be injured by my revelations.

The recent war scattered to the distant corners of the earth the men who gave their oath. I think I am the only one alive who is in possession of the genuine facts. A new country gave me shelter when I escaped the revolution. I am in America, now. And I believe the time has come to tell the truth to the people of America.

For generations the men in my family have served the royal Hapsburgs. One of my forefathers died on the field of battle, protecting the life of an Austrian king.

On the same day when the Empress Elizabeth, surrounded by court physicians, gazed for the first time upon the tiny features of her son, the Crown Prince Rudolph, my mother gave birth to me.

The Empress lay in state in the lofty gold and white chamber and the chapel bell on the Schönbrunn grounds rang out to the world the glad news. My mother, however, lay in a poor cottage at the edge of the estate, and

That Lost a Throne

to HENRY LIEFERANT

At Last the Fatal Secret of a Great Sacrifice Is Laid Bare

she used to tell me afterwards how she listened to the chimes that day and hoped that it was a good sign to have been born on the same day as the Prince. My father was a gardener, and in such simple surroundings I came into the world.

OF course, I cannot remember the very earliest days of my childhood, but I was told later that the Empress, a superstitious woman, had sent for my mother as soon as she was able to leave her bed. That royal command for my mother to appear before Elizabeth of Austria marked my first sacrifice to Rudolph. Of course, it was an enforced one, and how many more I made willingly and consciously I cannot count.

No well-born woman in Europe of that day nursed her own children. Even a well-to-do shop-keeper's wife didn't, and certainly it was out of the question with the Empress. Mystical, believing in signs and portents as she did, the Empress believed my mother was especially ordained to nurse the Crown Prince.

However, she could not nurse me at the same time, and so I was sacrificed that Rudolph might have the excellent care my mother was able to give him.

But the Empress was careful to see that I had a happy childhood. She was afraid I might exert some evil influence over him because of the chance circumstance of our birth.

As is often the case in royal households, it is necessary for a prince to have a constant playmate, one preferably beneath his station. Naturally, as soon as we both learned to travel about, I was chosen as his companion, and from those days I was slowly trained to enter his service.

I was called into his schoolroom to share his lessons; but he was a brilliant boy, where I was only bright, and often he teased me about my stupidity. I shared his ponies, then his horses, his dogs, his guns, his rambles through the woods, always remembering though that I was to be his attendant some day, not really his friend.

Yet, as we grew out of boyhood into young manhood, I became something more than a servant and just a little less than a friend. I know from my experience that every royal personage has one such man on whom he can rely for the warmth of ordinary daily contact.

I realized even then that he was telling me secrets that

Did the Empress Elizabeth know of Rudolph's love? Not until it was beyond her power to prevent it

he dared not confide to his regular attendants for fear they would repeat them to the Emperor. In short, I was his refuge from court intrigue, from espionage, from the ceremony of court life which he hated.

I WAS with him always; wherever he went, I was not very far distant, but I must say this constant proximity was no burden either on me or the Archduke Rudolph.

I would like to clarify my position. I was not his valet; but was willing to be one if the necessity arose. I was not his secretary, as he had one; yet often I wrote his most personal correspondence. I was not his body-guard, as the Secret Police took care of that. Yet I was always close enough to defend him with my person and life if necessary. My orders were never to leave him day or night, and to make this more feasible, I was given the rank of lieutenant of cavalry.

In his early twenties, Crown Prince Rudolph was as handsome a young man as the heart of the simplest village maiden could picture. Already he was in the toil of royal matchmakers and many a European princess visioned herself as the bride of the dashing Rudolph.

Tall, slender, with that physical litheness which comes of outdoor life, he wore his clothes with consummate ease, whether a uniform heavy with gilt braid, a hunting shirt, or a house coat. He bore himself erect, as one who must

some day wear a heavy, heavy crown. And his graceful carriage was the envy of many a court dandy.

Rudolph was considered the most intellectual prince of his time, not without reason. He had traveled a good deal, and had developed all that fascination and cleverness which distinguished so many of the male members of the Hapsburgs.

The shadow of madness hung over the House of Hapsburg. And sometimes I think his very cleverness, his very brilliant mind, were a little uncanny. Some people were afraid of him when his eyes flashed green; but to me he was ever the kindliest of masters.

I AM an old man now, and perhaps cannot see small print very clearly, but I do not need my eyes to look back into the past, to that day when Rudolph told me we were to start on a tour to "inspect eligible princesses."

"I cannot help myself, Hugo," he said over the chess board. "I have no recourse. I have just come from an interview with my father. It seems I must marry." He sighed.

"Yes, Your Highness," I answered. "It is not fitting for the Crown Prince—"

He stopped me. "I have heard all that. But let me tell you, Hugo, if I return with a bride, you shall find one, too. As we were born on the same day, let us be married on the same day."

I laughed at his plan. "I do not intend to marry, Your Highness. I have told you so before. My life is yours."

I recall how he picked up the carved ivory queen and studied the figure before he answered. "How lucky you are, Hugo, to be born a commoner! I wish I too did not have to marry," he said. "Until —until I really love. Until the one woman—do you know, Hugo, I have never really known love from others?"

I reminded him of his parents.

He shook his head, crowned by its thick mop of brown hair. "Between us we need not keep up this illusion," he pointed out. "All that is written about the Empress' great affection for me is not true. She has been heard to say that she was my mother by accident. And my father? He is the Emperor of Austria, even in the family circle with me."

There was something arch, yet artless, in Mary Vetsera's manner. She had the instinct of coquetry

I hinted he might find his love on this trip. Who could tell? Surely there must be among the princesses on his list one of regal beauty to whom he could lose his heart.

My lord doubted it. He said the choice was too narrow. A man should have the whole world to explore in order to find his mate. But he was powerless to change matters. The tradition of the country, his own high sense of duty, his future subjects, pointed the way.

"But it is not fair to the woman I marry, either, Hugo. What a wretched fate for a woman to be married to a man who cannot love her."

Of course I was far less serious about the problem than he was, for having been brought up to believe that the ways of royalty are beyond reproach, I deemed his objections rather childish. Besides, it seemed to me that any princess would be proud to be the consort of this gay, irresistible man.

"I dare say our European princesses are brought up to know they will only be pawns in politics," I put in.

He sighed again, and gazed out of the window at the lights of Vienna. "I suppose that is why there is so much infidelity among the nobility," he said. "May I never be drawn into *that* web, Hugo, after I am married."

Our first visit was to Dresden. Rudolph was of unstable temperament, volatile, moody, and as I inspected the list of stops we were to make, I realized his parents had picked out all the sober, quiet girls who were eligible.

The Princess Matilda of Saxony was fairly good looking in those days, but when we retired to his apartment the very first night, Rudolph shook his head.

"She is going to be unpleasantly fat some day," he said. "I see signs of it now. What is worse than an Empress who does not look the part?"

From Dresden in Saxony, we proceeded to Spain—all the servants, a military escort, chests of clothing, dogs, guns and everything. Here again disappointment was Rudolph's.

"The Infanta is a nice girl," he remarked. "But certainly her face is not her fortune."

Unfortunately for him at this time, Rudolph had inherited his mother's love of the beautiful, and when he found neither spiritual nor physical beauty in the seven princesses he visited, he became quite disgusted. Finally he arrived in Brussels, and there through sheer desperation, I think, because the Princess Stephanie was quite pretty, if a trifle stolid, and because she seemed enamored of him, he made the royal proposal to her.

"I hope it is for the best," was his dejected remark to me, after the Princess had accepted his suit, but I could see he had a premonition of disaster. Instead of being relieved, his mental burden seemed to have increased twofold.

From this time on until the magnificent wedding, Rudolph spoke very little of his private affairs. He worked very hard, he was writing a scientific thesis on the birds of the Carpathians, and wished to finish it before his marriage.

He took no part in the plans for festivities. Whatever arrangements the Empress made suited him, and he even did not want to be consulted as a matter of form.

Indeed, many times he sent for me, and indicating an array of jewels, or a table covered with princely trinkets, he would say, "I am to send one of these to the Princess Stephanie. You make the choice, Hugo, and dispatch the gift. You know as much about her taste as I do." And he would return to his notes, or his latest newspaper article.

RUDOLPH'S foreboding bore fruit too early. Stephanie created scenes of jealousy from the very start. She did not care very much who was in the room, either, when her angry passions got the better of her. And in my presence once the Empress Elizabeth censured Stephanie for her lack of control.

"Your behavior is unbefitting the Crown Princess," she told her in the clear, even sarcastic tones Elizabeth habitually used. "You must realize the scandals you cause by your public dissensions."

Many a time my ears burned for Rudolph at the things she said to him, and my blood would race madly at the injustice of her accusation.

Rudolph adored their child, a girl born two years after their marriage, but Stephanie resented his love for the little Archduchess, was jealous of the child's devotion to

her father, and used this situation, too, to start her innumerable quarrels.

Gossip began to spread about Rudolph's wild escapades in Vienna and its environs. Whatever I knew was sacred between us, and I neither defended nor condemned him. He had much to endure in his private life with Stephanie and the world could not realize it was just as hard for a Crown Prince to live with a petty, nagging, persistent woman as for a commoner.

I do not blame Stephanie either. Mine is not the duty of sitting in judgment on these two poor souls, torn by the exacting routine and the compulsions of a royal existence. They couldn't work out their own salvation as ordinary people may do. They were not free to make their own decisions.

PERHAPS, as the affianced bride of the desirable Crown Prince Rudolph, Stephanie of Belgium believed that by her sterling qualities she might win her husband's love after marriage. And she did have many sterling virtues which, sad to say, were lost track of by others because of her outbursts.

I must say this about Rudolph—never once, even to me, did he repeat what went on between himself and the Crown Princess when they were alone. Even among royalty there were not many who would have acted with his dignity and reticence.

Scenes enacted before me, I could not help remembering, but we never spoke of them. He did not complain in public as so many men, royalty included, do. He was a real thoroughbred.

In order to find a little peace, Rudolph kept his family in the castle at Laxenburg, and he himself made his headquarters at Hofburg Castle, right in Vienna. I know Her Highness the Crown Princess had many friends who sympathized with her, but contrary to the rumors they spread, Rudolph did not spend all his time in Vienna at wild orgies.

Once Stephanie paid him a surprise visit at the Hofburg, having come down from her own place without warning, meaning to confound him. She arrived with only one maid, and sending the maid to find me, requested that I come out to her carriage.

The Crown Princess had always been friendly to me, although very early in the whole matter I had made it plain to her that I would not carry tales about her husband. She never failed to ask me about my mother and sister, still living in the gardener's cottage at Schönbrunn, and that night she inquired even more warmly about them.

I know she expected me to hesitate when she asked me to conduct her to Rudolph. Muffled in her long cloak, she preceded me up the main stairway, and I sensed her astonishment at my alacrity.

To her amazement then, she did not find Rudolph carousing with women, but talking very soberly with men in his oak-panelled smoking room. She, indeed, was the only woman in the room.

As a matter of fact, Rudolph spent many hours in profound conversations on politics, religion, literature and science. True, women flocked about him and spoiled him, tempted him sometimes beyond endurance. Beautiful women aplenty there were in Vienna. Brilliant women, clever women, adventuresses, impoverished noblewomen, genuine royalty from all the corners of the earth. Every social gathering in the famous salons of the day was a galaxy of striking women, but if Rudolph found a passing attraction for any of them, that fancy was a temporary one.

No word of Rudolph's infatuation had reached his father, the Emperor Francis Joseph. Yet it was inevitable that the monarch should know

TO no woman did he give his heart and soul until he met Mary, Baroness Vetsera. I can say that safely, honestly, for I knew the attitude of my Prince toward women as no other was privileged to.

Luckily, the Archduke Rudolph confided in me from the very start of his acquaintance with lovely Mary Vetsera. Had he maintained the same secrecy about this as he did with his married life, I should not now have the accurate information which I am about to divulge. Except for his long talks with me, I should now have had no more authority to solve the mystery than did the rumormongers themselves.

Despite the fact that his feelings for Mary were far more sacred than those for Stephanie, I understood then and still understand why he spoke so freely to me of the former yet not of the latter. It is easier to close one's lips on unhappiness and keep them sealed. A man of will-power and dignity and spirit does not wish to whine.

But supreme happiness is only (*Continued on page* 88)

His Night of Vengeance

By Captain JACK MacLEOD

I pointed to the date-line on the paper. Then I saw a man go mad!

THE Old French Quarter of New Orleans seems never to change. Year after year the antique shops and second-hand book stores are found in exactly the same buildings that harbored them twenty years ago. At No. 638½ Royal Street, in an old three-storied building of the French period, John Chambers kept a second-hand book shop, but there was a mess of other stuff for sale thrown in. One day as I passed, old John had a card in his window: "Room."

I went in.

"AH, yes," he said. "I ask four dollars a week for the room. It's at the back of the house—" and he broke off on this doubtful note, as if wishing to be perfectly fair to me. He was the most doubtful little man I ever met. He always wore a brown derby hat indoors and never a coat or jacket. He used to like to stroke his shirt sleeves, and he was bald except for a little strip of gray hair that ran around the lower part of his skull like a fringe.

I noticed that he laid his newspaper on a tremendous pile of other newspapers in the corner of the room, before he decided to lead me upstairs, three flights, and display his offer. To a 'prentice of the arts, new to town, this had the appearance of a very satisfactory room at a very satisfactory price, and I said I would take it at the four dollars. Tree branches waved outside the window, and old John explained that before they built the house over there you could see the spire of the Cathedral. His tones implied that I had loitered.

"Of course, it's the back of the house," he said, when I had clinched the deal. "You've got a climb—" He went to the window, caressing his sleeves, and looked out. "I tell you what," he said, "three dollars."

AFTER that we went back downstairs and he climbed into the window to take out the card with "Room" on it. But with his fingers touching it, he hesitated and stroked his mouth.

"You're pretty sure not to stay," he decided; and he left the card where it was.

But I stayed with him for nearly a year—eleven queer, unusual months, with the evenings all spent back of the shop, behind a screen, listening to old John talking. He had some things to tell of, too. He had been all over the world, or said he had. On a shelf was a photograph, much dog-eared, of Regina—in Canada—in 1899. It was one of his treasures. And he had a trick of sighing for Central Park and Riverside Drive.

One night when I came down for my customary sit and gossip, I found him reading the newspaper, but when he saw me he took off his glasses and laid his paper on the top of the pile in the corner. This time I asked him why he did it.

"When I get a hundred pounds I sell them," he explained. "If I didn't watch little points like that I should never live. Until I get the hundredweight complete, that pile is like a reference library. You can go back six months. It's interesting—"

When I had been with him for a month, one night the shop door opened and somebody came in. The date was the sixth of October.

Why do I remember so clearly that it was the sixth? Well—

We were surprised to have a caller, customer or whatever he might be, so late at night, for it was after ten o'clock. He came in, closing the door behind him, walked down the shop and stared at us round the screen. There was no light in the shop at this hour; only the warm glow of the fire was on his face. It was

He Was a Man Whom Time Forgot. Fearing—Hating—He Waited. Waited for a Night That Was Past—

like holding a match to an iceberg. It would not have been surprising if the fire had suddenly gone out. He had a long face, with sunken cheeks and parted lips and staring eyes, and he was inside his overcoat as other men may be inside a house. I was, if you understand what I mean, repelled by the man without actually disliking him.

"My name is Darley," he announced in a breathy voice. "I am an author. I have had a nervous breakdown. I must have a room that is perfectly quiet. No interruption. You have a card in the window."

This crowded speech startled old John to such an extent that he nearly took his hat off. He stood, hurriedly stroking his sleeves and staring.

"Ah, yes," he said, "yes, that room is let. But perhaps I could manage another. Come along upstairs."

They went out and left me alone by the fire, thinking about the face of Darley. Both the face and the whole bearing of the man fed thought. In some ways he had kinship with the dead leaves against the walls outside.

By and by Mr. Chambers came downstairs, hurrying for the first and last time that I ever knew. His eyes asked questions of the universe; and as a concession to convention his derby was now tilted on the back of his head, pushed back in some excess of emotion.

"THERE is a mosa extraordinary mnt!" he whispered as he sat nervously in his chair, but only on the edge of it. "A most peculiar person! When I showed him the room he just said 'all right' and stood waiting for me to go. And do you know what he did, as soon as I was outside the door and had closed it? He locked it! And then he went across to the window and slipped the catch. That was a funny thing to do! I thought 'That's funny!' and I knocked on the door, meaning to ask if he would like a little something to eat—just as an excuse, you see. He never answered. He never made a sound. I don't think I like him. He's absolutely silent there. Do you think he's *dead?* I don't know what to do—

"DO you think we ought to break the door in?" he asked after a pause. "It's a most extraordinary position. Did you see his face? I wish he hadn't come here."

I tried to reassure the little man. There was nothing wrong, I said, and a man can't help his face. This Darley had had a nervous breakdown. He was a writer, and therefore not to be expected to conduct himself like an ordinary boarder. Everything would be all right, I said.

"Yes," agreed Mr. Chambers. "I suppose you're right. I hope you're right. I wish he hadn't come, though."

He peeped around the screen into the dark shop and at the prompting of a whimsical afterthought got up suddenly and went and climbed (*Continued on page 74*)

I saw him reaching for something, and instantly I stepped closer to him

Is it Possible that the Terrible Gift of a Long Dead

The Bleeding

She stood there — her eyes wide open. The light flared full upon her

WHAT Dudley Axminster brought out of Egypt, at the price of his life and a considerable fortune, was destined to play particular and unholy hob with the accepted scientific theories of a group of savants. Moreover, the weird mystery, which literally floated in from the deep, will always go down in the annals of crime as quite unprecedented and quite without rival.

Well, anything might come out of Egypt.

And anything did.

It was one of those leaky, wheezy nights; the ran rattling like dried peas on the roof, and a big-bellows northeaster blowing in smartly. Detective Sergeant Allenby had dropped in to sample some of Digby Gresham's Turkish "coffin-nails." Gresham had apparently forgotten his very presence. For the noted criminal investigator was knotted over a jaunl-diced-hued, ancient palimpsest — a parchment that looked as if Jonah's whale had swallowed it and straightway regretted his dietary indiscretion.

CAME the coyote squeal of brakes outside. The arrival promised something unusual. For Digby Gresham's diggings were salted away in a side street where traffic didn't boil over much, especially on climatically indisposed evenings.

Gresham put down his microscope. His gray eyes flashed like polished steel points. A quick step sounded on the stairs.

"Good enough, Steevie," he prophesied. "I've been expecting a call."

"A call? From whom?"

He tapped the morning paper slung into the waste-basket beside him.

"From Paris Palgrave, of course."

Allenby remembered the name and the few "sticks"—a Special to the World Wide. It was a queer bit of driftwood, which the Italian captain of the *Venetia* had salvaged, somewhere in the Mediterranean; the only thing that had come out of the deep to tell what had happened to the ill-fated felucca that had disappeared, as though swallowed down into Fiddler's Green, without so much as the flicker of an SOS for help. Not a survivor, except what had floated up, like a bit of cork refusing to be downed. And the morning paper had detailed its recent arrival and delivery to Palgrave.

Faltered fluttering fingers on the door. Gresham strode over, his long length dropping a giant shadow on the wall—like that which was to haunt them for many days to come.

"Come in, Palgrave," he invited. "Come in. I've been expecting you."

The new arrival halted on the threshold, giving Allenby the thirty-third degree from out of a pair of sea-blue eyes.

Princess Could Bring with it Age-old Sin and Tragedy?

Mummy

By F. M. PETTEE

"This is Detective Sergeant Allenby, Mr. Palgrave."

Palgrave smiled and held out a hand faultlessly gloved.

"I don't mind if Mr. Allenby is a friend of yours."

"He is—and better," answered Gresham with one of those rare grins of his that changed him instantly from an extraordinary thinking machine into a one hundred per cent human.

"Good enough," concurred Palgrave, in a big, booming voice that had delivered more than one sonorous lecture.

IN addition he had segregated a pretty stick of science, with two or three clever inventions filed against his record in the Patent Office. His face was brown, almost leathery tinted; a big, rugged fellow, six feet if he were an inch, with a brow like that on the bust of the Napoleon on one of Gresham's book-cases; and a jaw like the young Augustus. He settled into a big chair Gresham had flung out for him. He unbuttoned his heavy tweed motor coat. He ripped off his gloves and brought out a long, legal envelope and spread out a letter upon the desk. A heavy scarab ring gleamed duskily from a little finger.

"I want you to hear this thing that Axminster mailed me out of Cairo," he said, "before he took passage to his everlasting sleep on the ill-starred *Firenze*."

DEAR PALGRAVE (it ran)

I have learned a lot in this fever-ridden hole. The Valley of the Kings is a treasure-spot all right. I've spent months here. And they have been priceless to me. There is nothing that the Pharaohs didn't know. Nothing, I tell you. They knew strange things. Strange, I repeat. And it wasn't superstition either.

And now I've succeeded in acquiring rightful ownership of a little brown princess, Amon-Ya, daughter of one of the Pharaohs. I bought this ancient, thousand-year-old princess for a pretty penny from the Egyptian government and England. Amon-Ya was a lesser star among all the stellar discoveries more munificently buried away. But I bought her as she now remains, hermetically sealed in her wooden jacket, because of the odd message set down there in Pompeian red, unlike any other mummy-case I've ever seen. It passed by the judges of things Egyptian because the covering is roughly and crudely done, and because it is not richly carved and lacquered in gold-leaf. But to me, it is the most remarkable thing that has come out of the Valley of the Kings.

Its message is breath-taking, even as it is strange. For it bears a threat like that which clung to Cleopatra's mummy—the threat of violent death to whomsoever shall desecrate the mummy within. In the name of Osiris, the threat is set down, three times repeated, in pictograph difficult indeed to decipher. It took me days of most tedious toil. Even now I am not sure of all the characters.

I am bringing the little princess with me, securely sealed within her wrappings of the centuries. In addition, I have caused to be made an exceedingly strong three-ply, brass-bound, fiber chest. This is cork-lined and guaranteed air-and water-proof. I shall seal the wooden case containing the mummy within this air-tight case of my own design. I have directed it to you against any unforeseen contingency.

The mummy of Princess Amon-Ya belonged to Paris Palgrave. There was a curse upon it; and Palgrave feared its fall

I suppose this precaution on my part will make you laugh. But one doesn't come out of Egypt a scoffer and a skeptic over the strange things which are quite inexplicable by any Occidental lore. I have a premonition that the curse set down beneath the cartouche of Amon-Ya will fall upon me. There is no other way to explain the isolation in which I found it undisturbed, with the marks of vandals everywhere about. But they avoided her as though she were the pest.

I have directed the box to you, in case a touch of the fever—or something else—prevents my delivering it to you in person. And against my untimely end—my sudden death—I have already made my will, bequeathing the mummy of the little princess, the daughter of the Pharaoh, the sleeping, yet tainted Amon-Ya, to you.

In case I do not return, I ask you to follow out just one injunction. . . .

PALGRAVE paused for a scrapped second to interpolate, making an aimless gesture:

"Undoubtedly you have seen the special to the World Wide setting down Captain Garobaldi's salvaging of the chest somewhere off the Isle of Crete. The box was this special-made-to-order one of Axminster's, hermetically inclosing the mummy-case containing the cerements and the body of Amon-Ya. It refused to sink. It was the sole survivor of the ill-starred *Firenze*. It was addressed to me in waterproof paint, shellacked over.

When I opened up the fiber chest, it was as dry as bone-dust inside. Unsinkable."

"Odd thing," commented Gresham. "And the injunction?"

Paris Palgrave turned back to his message from the dead. He cleared his throat. Obviously he was deeply moved by some uncontrollable emotion. He read on:

I ask, in the cause of science, that you learn all there is to be discovered concerning Amon-Ya and the pictographs crudely done on the wooden jacket holding the dust of centuries. I further request that, since I have deprived the museum of an uncommon specimen, you cause to be made an air-tight glass case, such as might be used for display purposes in the museum at Cairo. I entreat that you break the dust-dimmed seals of centuries—that you rend the "veils" hiding the mummy of Amon-Ya—in the name of science. After the mummy has been properly "excavated" from its wooden coffin, I suggest that you leave it, uncovered, in its wooden case, within the plate-glass cabinet, where anyone so desirous may have the privilege of studying it within your house at Spruce Island.

FURTHERMORE, I caution you against careless tampering with the slumbering, sinister secrets of centuries, known only to a remarkable people. They took many strange methods of holding their dust inviolate and of wreaking vengeance upon any vandal desecrating their sleep. I would suggest that you work with the utmost precaution against any unknown and subtle means of bringing sudden death upon any disturber of the long slumbers of Amon-Ya. She was the daughter of a Pharaoh, you know, and the Pharaohs were the Borgias of ancient Egypt. But modern science can circumvent the subtlest poisons. See that you take all care.

Why don't you invite down a bunch of fellows who you know will be most interested in seeing this one prize of a long hidden tomb? Get a group of hard-headed men down and obtain their idea of the warning set down in the pictograph. Likewise, see if they can ascertain how the wily Pharaohs of Egypt took secret steps to preserve and to avenge their bodies against careless disturbance. We'll thrash this out personally together.

Paris Palgrave looked up. He folded the heavy paper until it crinkled like ancient parchment between his long fingers. Without a word he returned it to its long envelope with its foreign stamps. He slid it painstakingly into his inner coat pocket.

Gresham sat with folded arms, staring out against the rain-daubed windows. His face was emotionless. His eyes were fathomless pools.

Palgrave tuned in, out of the silence-pocket that followed:

"I rather like Axminster's idea. Odd chap, but a deep one. A genius on ancient things pertaining to Egypt. The glass case is practically ready. It will stand in the curio-room of my bungalow down on Spruce Island. I'm staging this ceremony for Friday night of this week. That's three days away. I've asked members representing various branches of science to be present: Dr. Hampton, for the medical profession; Alston Argive, State toxicologist, to see if he can find anything to verify poor Axminster's hunch that a subtle poison is hidden about the mummy. I'll have along the artist, Claude Fenwick. He'll be keen to make a painting of the thing, as well as to study the colors burnt into the old case. Last of all, of course, I've included Professor Benedict, Egyptologist, and curator at the museum. My niece Olive is entertaining for the month the young mystery-story writer, Pauline Long—"

"I know," recalled Gresham. "She did that rip-snorting, odd thing, 'The Shrunken Skull.' Best thing in a decade."

"I want you," resumed Palgrave, "to be there when we awaken"—he laughed banteringly—"the princess from her death cerements. And," he bowed at Allenby, "Detective Sergeant Allenby might represent the police. I may need some one to protect my ancient treasure."

"Jolly handsome of you," Allenby accepted with boyish eagerness.

Palgrave got up to go.

"Well," decided Gresham slowly, "I'll run along down for the occasion. I'd rather like to have a look at Axminster's prize princess. And I'm rather keen on the remote possibility of some subtly concealed poison. In my judgment, however, the tales of violent death falling in the wake of certain disturbed Egyptian mummies is the purest fiction, spun by enterprising journalists. They read well. But I've got to be shown, though Axminster's rampant enthusiasm is highly contagious. But we'll be there, Allenby and I."

GRESHAM saw him out. He returned to his desk in a brown study. Palgrave's car purred away through the downpour. The rain kept up a steady pat-patting on the window—tapping fingers from the dark.

"Digby," Allenby suddenly asked, "was Axminster actually a friend of Palgrave?"

Gresham's steel-gray glance crossed Allenby's like swords suddenly freed of their nullifying scabbards. "That's telepathy. I was wondering about that, myself. They were brother scientists, as you might say, with a kindred, driving interest."

"Yes," Allenby mused, apparently floundering for adequate words. "But isn't there always a deep-down, professional jealousy smouldering between two of a calling? Answer me that!"

"Sometimes," conceded Gresham, from a ripely rueful experience.

"Well, what I'm trying to get off my heaving chest is this. Suppose Axminster was peeved against Palgrave for some reason that hasn't come to light.

Did He Betray His Country?

Fabulous wealth was offered to Lieut. Paul Mainau, of the Austrian Army, to sell his country—and his honor. Life imprisonment was held out to him as his doom should he refuse.

He knew that he was in the power of a master spy who was plotting intrigues and wars. He knew that upon him rested the burden of saving his own country from the fate that menaced it—and to him came that offer to sell his country's secrets that led Mainau into some of the most curious experiences that ever befell a man.

The true story of Mainau's adventures is revealed in the April issue of TRUE STRANGE STORIES.

Wouldn't Axminster's trump card be a play to send Palgrave, under the screen of an Egyptian princess, something mighty unhealthy for him? You don't mean to tell me, Digby, that a hard-boiled, A-1 scientist like Axminster would really fall for all that curse-stuff about hidden vengeance, subtle poison, and all the rest of the hocus-pocus! There's something deep afoot—something deeper and blacker than the cold and stony crypt from which they dug Pharaoh's little girl-baby."

Behind Allenby's banter Gresham sensed his earnestness. Moreover, the headquarters man had put into words his own baffled, uneasy thoughts.

"Steevie," he commended, "you've said a mouthful. Something very black has come out of Egypt. And I think that Paris Palgrave is afraid—is mightily wrought up over something he doesn't tell. Hence our invitation to be among those present."

"HOW did you have such a life-line on Palgrave?" Allenby asked suddenly.

"I've been reviewing his genealogy," admitted Gresham, reluctantly dragging his gaze back to Allenby. "He's been around the world almost as many times as you used to tramp out your Hartley Street - Dalton Square beat. He's picked up queer things, too—being a man of means.

Gresham considered a moment. "I haven't told you all I know concerning Olive Palgrave, nor how I happen to know it. Paris Palgrave came to me with regard to the lost scarab because—well, it involved his niece. Involved her strangely, inexplicably. I'll tell the thing to you—in strictest confidence."

"All right, shoot. And double mummy is my name," coaxed Allenby.

Gresham produced his cigarette - case. He puffed for some moments in absolute silence.

"I want you to read this," said Palgrave. "Axminster mailed it before he took passage to his everlasting sleep—"

First time I ever met Palgrave involved the disappearance of a fine scarab from out of his private collection. Since then I've heard on the q. t. that he's been collecting perfect pearls. Has a pretty hoard salted away. The house is a small museum anyway. Assorted curios picked up from all over."

"Who," demanded Allenby irrelevantly, "make up Palgrave's immediate family?"

"His sister-in-law, brother's widow—married Major Huxley Palgrave, U. S. A. A touch of the cholera cut the major down."

"And the Olive branch?"

"Paris Palgrave's niece. Can't be a day over twenty, and yet—there's something about her that's as baffling as—as the sphinx, if you get me. Knows too much. Over-precocious."

He seemed to be looking backward over his shoulder introspectively, to gauge the affair through the clarifying agency of time, of prolonged thought, and at a tempering distance.

"PARIS PALGRAVE came to me some months ago," he began. "The finest scarab in his considerable collection had been neatly lifted from the show-case where he keeps his choicest curios. Like the enthusiast that he is, he was much distressed, for he had a complicated and thoroughly efficient burglar-proof system networking the house and the outer walls. This had been undisturbed. So he carried the unpleasant conviction that some one within the house had taken the missing scarab. Yet he employed but two servants at the time.

"The scarab case had been unlocked with a duplicate key. An impression of the lock had undoubtedly been made for the dummy key. His sister-in-law, Dalla Palgrave, was away at the time, visiting friends. But Olive was at home and the (*Continued on page* 66)

From Amid the Ruins of a Lost City, Voices of the Dead

My road led to the old deserted town. Once it had been alive with care-free miners. Now it was silent and forbidding, shunned by all who passed

Answered the Cry of a Forgotten Murderer

THE CRIME that Lured Him Back

The "ghost town" had been a thriving city once. With the passing of the years, it became a deserted village—forgotten and uninhabited One day a living man began haunting the town, peopling it with his fancy, and finally revealing the secret of his life

By CLINT STETSON

As told to BEN CONLON

DESERTED mining camps are frequent in the West. Most automobile tourists wandering through that section have seen them. Such towns are the tombs of broken hopes and ambitions. Such a place is Oretown, Colorado.

I was urging my weary horse to somewhat greater effort on one of those chilly, penetratingly-damp nights peculiar to this region in early spring. The hour was very late—it must have been close to eleven-thirty at night—and I heartily wished myself between the blankets in my home in San Sebastian, about twelve miles west of Oretown. The day before I had ridden from San Sebastian to a place called Paradise Valley, sixteen miles east of Oretown, and had spent many hours making an examination of a couple of mining claims; I had toiled up gulches, climbed slide rock and traced outcroppings of veins, probed into open cuts and crawled through workings which had been abandoned by those who had made them. Small wonder, then, that I was dog-tired as, with only a little more than half of my horseback ride completed, I struck the trail that led up toward Oretown.

PARADISE VALLEY is very badly named; nothing at all to suggest Paradise about this drab, barren region, with its desolate trails and monotonous, rattler-infested wastes. And the route from the Valley to Oretown was most depressing. I had passed Pop Gaebner's dreary little shack, which he called a store, since he sold supplies to intermittent prospectors—tobacco, blankets, utensils and such things. I had hoped to find a light in Gaebner's place, so that I might drop in and warm myself. But the shack, or store as he called it, was dark and deserted—old Gaebner must be asleep, I thought. Tenantless cabins flanked the road here and there—the deserted home of a placer miner who had been found dead with his six-gun in his hand; the crumbling abode of an old Mexican, Pete Sanchez, who, trying to wrest a living from the cruel hills for years, had finally surrendered and had been taken down to Salida to the poorhouse; other landmarks, all just as dreary, just as dark, just as miserable.

Now, as I approached Oretown, the oppressive silence was broken only by the even beating of my horse's hoofs and the faint noises of the night. As I progressed along, slowly, on account of the dark, I could hear the incessant gurgling of the creek which ran through the center of he gulch.

IT sounded raucous and mocking, there so near to landmarks of tragedy—the cabin in which the placer miner, Tam McLeod, had committed suicide; the deserted shack of Sanchez; the dark and forbidding-looking store of Pop Gaebner.

I can think of no place except the open ocean which could possibly be more away from the center of things than the trail about Oretown; on that trail, especially late at night, a man can be absolutely alone with his thoughts. And he has thoughts on such a trail; he thinks of things that would never occur to his mind in the life of cities or the snug routine of small towns. I began to think of Pop Gaebner, and to wonder why he had picked out such a lonely spot for his "store," as he called it. I also thought of Tam McLeod, as rugged and canny and nervy a Scot as ever lived, allowing the solitude of the place to get on his nerves and end in his self-destruction.

Then my tired body stole these thoughts from my mind. The hoof-sounds of my willing horse seemed to lull me. I felt myself getting drowsy, and now and then closed my eyes. But only for seconds at a time, and then with the thought in the back of my head that I was taking a chance, for I had not yet reached the road veering away from the mountain shelf towards the broad plateau of which San Sebastian was the center.

Clip-clop. Clip-clop. Clipta-clopta. My horse stumbled, and I opened my eyes quickly. Through the landmarks, smudgy through the darkness, I could see that I must have this time slept a full two minutes, despite the dangerous trail. The last time I had opened my eyes my horse had been struggling up the lower part of the hills that led into Oretown; now we were on the brow of the hill, even with a great, black building which I knew to be the remains of the Oretown Smelter. The roof of the plant had collapsed many years before, and

the walls, for the greater part, had tumbled down. But a gaunt old chimney still leaned at a crazy angle, as though defying the hand of Time to topple it over.

The worst of the grade was over. I rowelled my horse gently, and he broke into a slow lope. Through the gloom I could make out a hazy picture of desolation—rotting remains of stores and saloons, nearly all of them roofless, their windows and doors staring out vacantly like eyeless sockets; many of the buildings were charred ruins, for Oretown, in its last days, had met the ultimate fate of most camps and had been partially swept by fire.

I rode through Oretown; it seemed like a body from which the life and soul had fled; a dead thing, waiting for Time to bury it. I was reaching the outskirts now. But one building remained to be passed. That was what, in the old boom times of the town, had been called the "Louisiana House." Just why this hotel, saloon, dance-hall and general "palace of pleasure," crudely constructed so far from Louisiana, had received its name, I never knew. I don't even know now. Possibly some Louisianian had come there years ago when the town was rippling with life, had prospered, and had built the hotel and named it for his native state. It lay on the edge of the hill, overlooking what was called Shotgun Gulch.

THE gulch had held well its age and its vigor; the Louisiana House, like all man-made things in deserted Oretown, was vacant, decrepit, decayed.

As I rode within a hundred yards of the deserted old hostelry, I thought I heard singing. The idea seemed nothing short of ridiculous. There was no sound of any approaching horse, and, even so, a rider would hardly be singing on a night like this, at such an hour. The sound seemed to come from the Louisiana House. More impossible than ever. The Louisiana House had not been occupied in years; it would not even be good for shelter for a lonely wayfarer. Its walls sagged, and its roof leaked badly. I must have been mistaken. So I imagined.

But as I came to the turn at the summit of the road, I rubbed my eyes, took off my sombrero which had been dripping water down on my face, and stared ahead of me. No, I could not be mistaken this time. This was no illusion. I looked upon a very strange thing—but it was real.

For the Louisiana House, once the most celebrated of Oretown's centers of revelry, this old, sagging, crumbling, deserted hotel, closed for years, was lighted up, and lighted up very brilliantly!

I am a little afraid that I cannot make clear the degree of my surprise to anyone who has not known Oretown, or at least some of the deserted mining camps of the West. The place was absolutely lifeless; its buildings had been deserted by the miners as soon as the gold—discovered there many years before—had pinched out. Since there was not the leanest kind of a living to be made, and since men must live, the miners had trooped away from Oretown to new and more promising diggings; and with them went their followers of saloon-keepers, gamblers and painted women. Rusty old dust-scales teetered on the time-scarred counter of the assaying office; a broken roulette wheel stood on a sagging table in the crude gambling-house; a few cans of mildewed fruit rested on the crumbling shelves of the village store. But this was all that remined of this former mining metropolis, which once had a population of close to three thousand inhabitants. Once fiddles had sounded in the dance-hall; rough miners' boots had scuffed about the floor in time with the fiddle-strains and the softer soles of abandoned women. So long as the gold flowed, the music flowed—and flowed, too, the drink and the women's laughter, hollow enough, yet solace to inebriated miners whose recent path had been trod in solitude.

Now Oretown was dead and gone. The most optimistic prospectors had long since ceased to find any intriguing leads in a district which had been combed futilely by hundreds of fortune-hunters; even hunters and fishermen seldom visited the dreary region about Oretown; only some one like myself, taking a short-cut back to San Sebastian, would be apt to find himself in such a strange place at night.

And yet that brilliantly lighted hotel was a reality! I had passed the deserted building on several occasions; always, in daylight, it had looked gray and dreary; always, at night, black and deserted and forbidding. And the light pouring forth through the dusty windows was not merely the firefly glow of a candle, indicating that some tramp might have taken a chance on making it a night-shelter against the rain. (And, indeed, such a tramp might better have braved the elements outside.) But there were many lights. As many as twenty candles or a dozen lanterns must have been lighted. The scene before me, in fact, looked like what the Louisiana House must have looked like back in those old boom days of the settlement when men and women danced there, and drank, and laughed, and sang ribald songs, and made the most of their life in their own crude way, knowing that the time would come when they, like the Louisiana House and Oretown, must die and be dead forever.

I sat there and looked fixedly ahead, over the ears of my horse which were sticking straight up in curiosity. I heard the animal's low nicker, indicating the presence of humanity, or perhaps another horse, or some hidden danger nearby along the trail.

Dismounting, I still held my horse firmly by the bridle-ring. I did not like the prospect of having him bolt and leave me there in that deserted town at midnight, eleven or twelve weary miles from my home in San Sebastian.

I ARGUED with myself for minutes as to whether I would go in and investigate the reason for the strange lights, or whether I would ride on about my business. Who was there to see and know? And yet—

After all, I thought, I was not a coward. I went armed in rough camps and along lonesome trails, and took no back talk; I sought no trouble, but I did not go out of my way to avoid it. I had built a reputation for courage back in high school in Pueblo, and in college at Boulder, and among the sometimes rough elements with which my mining work threw me in contact.

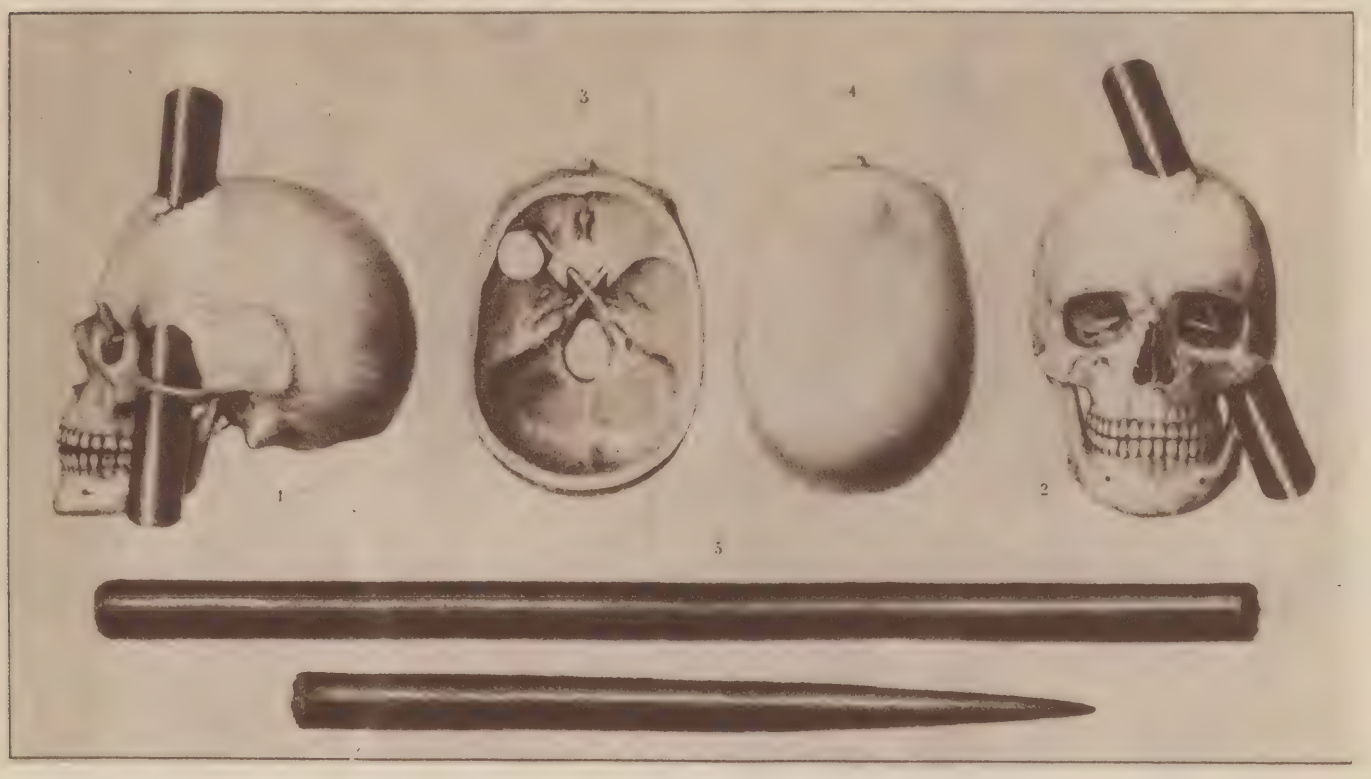
No, sir! If I passed this strangely lighted building tonight, to come back to investigate on the morrow, the mysterious tenant or tenants might be gone; and the secret with them. And my respect for myself gone, as well.

That settled it! I walked my animal over to the hitch-rail, but as I tried to tie the bridle-reins over the timber, the rotted wood crumbled in my hand; accordingly, I made use of my stake-rope and hobbled my horse in front of the old hotel. Then, with my Colt in my right hand, I walked up the creaking steps of the veranda—the old miners used to call it "the gallery"—of the Louisiana House.

The faint sound of singing came through the door, and mingled with the whine of the rusty hinges as I threw open the shabby portal to stand in the musty-smelling lobby or inner vestibule. Now the singing had ceased again, and a man was talking. I clutched my gun a little more firmly; a voice meant to me that there was more than one man in the old place; and there, probably, for no good purpose.

Warily, I crept over toward (*Continued on page* 91)

Is It Possible for a Crowbar to Pierce a Man's Brain and Let Him Live?



The skull of Phineas P. Gage, and the crowbar that shot through his jaw and brain, may be seen at the Warren Anatomical Museum in Cambridge, Mass. After being wounded as shown above, Gage lived thirteen years

By L. L. HENSON, JR.

THE AMAZING CASE OF PHINEAS P. GAGE

Have you a "silent area" in your brain?

To the existence of such a strange spot in every one's brain is ascribed the almost unbelievable escape from death of Phineas P. Gage, whose case is recognized as unique and authentic by medical authorities.

A prominent physician explains that the crowbar, in its passage, went through a "silent area" in Gage's brain. This area may be injured without affecting the rest of the brain, he stated. Had the bar deviated but a tiny fraction of an inch, however, or traveled at an angle, Gage could hardly have escaped instant death.

One of the first documented reports of the case appeared in the "Boston Medical and Surgical Journal" of December 13, 1848. It was written by Dr. J. M. Harlow.

WITH the speed of a bullet, an iron bar, weighing 13 pounds, pierced a man's head above his left jaw-bone, shot through his brain, and burst through the top of his head, falling forty feet away. *The man walked home and lived to tell the tale for many years.*

Can such strange things really happen? That is the question that comes to the mind of everyone as he reads of the weird experience of Gage. Unbelievable as the story seems at first glance, it is absolutely true. The man to whom it happened survived an experience that stands unique in the history of medical science, which is well acquainted with this case.

It happened to Phineas P. Gage in the autumn of 1848. It was so strange a case that doctors who heard of it shook their heads doubtfully and demanded proofs. But their curiosity was piqued, nevertheless. Months afterward, a large group of physicians examined the case thoroughly, and admitted its truth. Medical history has accepted the facts.

The summer of 1848 brought increased activity to the little town of Cavendish, Vermont. A new railroad development was being pushed into the hills outside the town.

The foreman of the construction crew was a young, husky Yankee. He was only twenty-five years old, but his very appearance inspired confidence. His face was that of a man who had learned self-control; who was temperate in his habits; and quiet to the point of taciturnity. His name was Phineas P. Gage. He was boarding with Joseph Adams, hotel-keeper and justice (*Continued on page* 86)

The STATE and Yet

As Told By ANTONIO SFORZA

I opened the door. There was Pietro—the man whom I sought—seated at the end of a table

I AM a dead man; at least the surgeon general of one of the American states says so; so does the warden of the states prison; and so do the representatives of a news association All of these men were present at my execution and made due return of the fact as Government witnesses, as required by law.

Still, I am alive, although I am a very sad man. I sit here in my vineyard on a Sicilian hillside, quaff my chianti, and smoke my cigarette, and tell you that I am both dead and alive; dead in America, and alive in Sicily where I am so sad.

My name is Antonio Sforza. I was born and lived in Sicily until I was eighteen years of age. I was betrothed to the most beautiful girl of my district—Paula Noara. Her parents were dead but she was quite an heiress, owning the little house in which she lived, the little plot of land surrounding it, two fat pigs and a number of hens. She had been sought in marriage by Pietro Antonelli, who owned a little land adjoining her house. When he learned of our betrothal, he made much talk in the villarge, saying that the marriage should never take place.

One morning in July, while on my way to shoot hares in the neighboring forests, I saw Paula at her gate. She promised that on my return from my day's hunting she would cook for me one of my hares and we would have supper together. I went cheerfully on my way.

It was a bright and glorious day; the last happy day that I can remember. I had good luck in my hunting and returned at nightfall, my gamebag loaded with the creatures I had shot. As I approached the house of Paula, everything seemed very still. Usually Paula was singing at her work at this hour, but no sound disturbed the stillness, and no smoke rose from the chimney of the little house.

As I opened the gate of her front yard and started to walk up to her door, I saw many horrible things: her two pigs lay dead by the pathway, their throats cut; her hens lay dead all about the grass. I knocked at her door; their was no response, and I finally lifted the latch and pushed the door open. There on the floor lay my poor Paula, dead as were the pigs, and on closer examination, it appeared that she had been stabbed to the heart, and had suffered many other horrible things which I will not relate.

I RUSHED from the house with loud cries of distress and grief. On the road I met a neighbor who told me that Pietro was in the village very drunk and boasting that he had made it impossible for Paula to be the wife of any other man. I loaded my gun, and started on a run for the village. As I entered its one street, I saw Pietro shouting and laughing at the top of his voice, surrounded by a crowd, all of whom were as drunk as he evidently was. When he saw me approaching with my gun in my hands and my face distorted with rage and grief, he took to his heels and ran down the street in the opposite direction. I fired a shot after him, but missed. In another moment his companions had surrounded me and wrenched my gun from my hands, so my revenge could not be consummated that evening.

THE next day early in the morning, I tried to find Pietro but was told that he had left the village with a pack on his back, saying that he was going to America.

Such, indeed, was the fact, and in process of time, I too took a ship for America, with revenge and the desire for murder filling my heart.

I searched in America, which is a very great country, for many years; sometimes I heard from my countrymen that they had seen Pietro in this place or that, but when I reached the place spoken of, Pietro had gone to some other place, and my search had to begin again.

I was a poor man, and all this time had to earn my living by jobs in the construction gangs of railways, and among day laborers of the great cities. One summer I spent in a little town, and in September, started on a long tramp to New York, intending to spend the winter there,

Electrocuted Me I LIVE!

The amazing story of the time when the death-dealing electric chair was cheated is revealed here by the man who escaped from it—alive

to MARSHALL P. THOMPSON

and to seek news of Pietro among my country men who lived in the great city.

ABOUT six o'clock, I entered what I was told was a boarding-house for Italian workmen by the roadside beyond a good-sized town. There, at the head of a long dining-room table, sat Pietro. As I entered the room, he saw me, and rising quickly from the table, seized a carving knife and threw it at me with all the force of which he was capable. I fell to the floor to escape the knife, and in a moment or so, Pietro stood over me, brandishing a stiletto in his hand. I rolled over to one side in order to escape him and to get a chance to rise. In doing so, a loaded revolver, which I had always carried in my pocket, fell upon the floor. Just as Pietro was about to stab, I seized the gun and shot him.

When he saw me, he seized a carving knife and threw it at me with all the force of which he was capable

As Pietro staggered and fell, I leaped to my feet, and held the still smoking revolver in my hand, ready for a fresh attack from Pietro, should he revive. At this moment, a policeman, attracted by the noise of the shot, entered the room, and finding the still smoking pistol in my possession, at once arrested me and took me to the nearest jail.

In the course of time, I was indicted for murder and brought to trial. As I had no money with which to hire a lawyer to defend me, the judge appointed a young man just admitted to the bar, who was a nice fellow and earnest, but lacked experience, and was no match for the grizzled district attorney who conducted the prosecution.

Witness after witness had been summoned by the Government, and told of meeting me in various places and of the threats I had uttered in their hearing against Pietro, should I ever find him. The policeman who arrested me testified to entering the room and finding Pietro's, dead body on the floor with a pistol bullet wound, sufficient to cause his death, and myself standing over him with the still smoking revolver in my hand.

As I did not know English at all well, and could probably not be understood by the jurors, my lawyer advised me not to take the stand, and I followed his advice, although greatly against my own judgment.

The district attorney fairly made a monkey of my young advocate, and the twelve men on the jury quickly and promptly brought in a verdict of murder in the first degree. Of course the case was appealed, and the appeal lost in the Supreme Court, but many of my country men knew me and knew something of my story, and had started a great agitation for my release.

The governor of the state, however, refused to pardon me, and after many months I was lodged in the state's prison and my execution fixed for a time about thirty days from the day in which I was taken there.

WHILE I was there, an Italian priest visited me; an old man and kindly, who believed my story and sympathized with me most strongly. One day he brought to see me a rough, uncouth looking man, who, he said, was an expert electrical worker, and had something of importance to tell me.

This man told me that the electricity used in electrocutions was a direct current. To-day, I understand, what is called an alternating current is used; but at that time, the direct current was employed. The electrician told me that men who were electrocuted were suffocated, as though they had been drowned. He also said that he had installed one of the first electric chairs which had

been used for executions in America; that during the installation, he was assisted by another man, who by accident, came in contact with the wires connecting the chair with the dynamo, and that he had dropped to the ground, apparently (said the electrician) as dead as dead could be. The electrician had hastily removed the clothing from the man, had carried him to the yard of the prison and there laid him in a muddy place which had been caused by the rain of the night before. There, the electricity had flowed from his body as the water is expelled from the lungs of a man who has been immersed in the ocean. After some little time, the assistant had revived, and to-day, according to the electrician, was as well as ever. Then he lowered his voice, and said that if I could put him in touch with some of my friends who were at the head of a great Italian society which believed me innocent, and could have my body delivered to my friends immediately after the execution and conveyed out of the prison to a little Italian chapel, which was not far away, he thought he could manage to revive me, and that I could then escape to Sicily.

I WAS very suspicious of the man and sent him to my young lawyer. As the days rapidly drew nearer the week appointed for my execution, I heard nothing further from him, so, as well as I was able, I prepared my soul for the hereafter.

I had managed to acquire in jail a much better knowledge of English, and the warden and officers had really become my friends, and were becoming impressed with my story. One day, they brought to see me a certain police detective, who had a long conversation with me and was also apparently impressed with the truth of my story.

The evening came of the day at which at midnight I was to be executed. I had made my confession to the priest, and had received absolution. The prison barber had visited me, shaved a round spot on my head, and had shaved my knees to which my pair of prison trousers were slit.

At one minute after midnight, the warden, two jailers, and the priest came to my cell. We walked slowly down a long corridor, but I walked unsupported, and the newspapers said the next day that I was the coolest man in the presence of death who had ever approached the electric chair.

In a few moments we entered the death chamber. At one side was seated the surgeon general of the National Guard; on either side, a prominent physician. The warden, of course, was present, with the priest, and three or four jailers. They quickly placed me in the electric chair, fastened the straps about me, placed a wet sponge on the spot which had been shaved on my head, two other sponges on my knees, and were about to adjust a bandage over my eyes when I refused. Then in a second of time, although to me it seemed hours, the warden dropped his handkerchief, and I knew nothing more.

At my next conscious moment I found myself in a cellar, immersed in a bath of warm mud. The room was small and dimly lighted by a little gas jet. In it was the electrician who had visited me in the jail, and two or three other men who were masked. The electrician suddenly turned to the other men and said, "He is alive." I was lifted out from the mud, taken up a flight of stairs, and placed in a bed in a little chamber behind the altar of a chapel. Here, I was bathed and one of the masked men skillfully massaged me. I was brought stimulating drinks and warm food. In this little room I remained concealed for sometime until, at length, my strength was restored, and the hair on my shaven crown had grown out again.

Then, one day, I was visited by a barber who was masked as had been the men in the cellar. My hair was cut, and I was shaven smooth. The barber placed on my face, which had grown pale in prison, some sort of lotion or stain, which gave me the appearance of being deeply tanned; he also applied the lotion to my hands and forearms, which also became a dark brown as though they too had been tanned.

The electrician told me that the current would not kill—that he could bring me back to life!

ANOTHER masked man came in soon after this and brought a pair of dark-blue spectacles, or goggles. He also brought me the finest suit of clothes that I had ever seen, and a tall silk hat. Arrayed in these clothes and with the goggles placed on my nose, I did not know myself when a mirror was brought for my inspection. Another man entered later, also masked, who placed a pocket-book in my possession filled with bank notes, and a purse containing gold, silver, nickel, and copper coins. He then told me that a carriage would arrive at the chapel that evening. It was on a Sunday, and there was to be a service there; at the close of the service, I was to join the congregation and leave the place with them, entering the carriage which would be at the door. There would be travelling bags in it, and at the rear, a trunk. These would be filled with other clothes, with linen, and other things, which would make several complete wardrobes. The masked man also gave me a steamship ticket, a reservation for a stateroom, and also a ticket for New York, telling me that a steamer bound for Italy would leave New York the next day on which I was to take

passage, that I was registered in the purser's office as Antonio Sforza, and under that name I was to cross the ocean and return to Sicily, but to a different portion of the island from that in which I had formerly lived.

I left the chapel with the congregation; entered the carriage as directed, and was driven for some hours over the roads leading to another state. There I entered a train bound for New York. Arriving in that city, I quickly found my way to the Italian steamer, and was installed in a good stateroom. Here I remained for almost the entire voyage.

Finally, arriving at Naples, I went to a small hotel, and there changed from my magnificent suit of clothes to a common peasant's costume which I found in my trunk. The next day I sailed for Sicily in a felucca, which happened to be bound thither. Arriving at a small port in Sicily, I was met by a member of the great Italian society who informed me that in a far different part of Sicily from that in which I was brought up, a small house and vine-yard had been purchased for me, so I proceeded to go there.

I was soon settled in my new quarters, and in a few weeks became quite contented. It happened that there was no one in that part of Sicily who had been acquainted with me in my early life, so for years I remained in this quiet neighborhood, unrecognized and unknown to the people about me.

One evening, several years after I had settled down to this quiet life, while walking home from a nearby village, I met on the road two men who had been members of a construction gang in which I had worked in America. The moon was full and they saw me clearly; they glanced at me doubtfully; then crossed themselves, and fled at top speed, doubtless thinking I was a ghost.

After several more years, I was startled to come face to face on the village street with the detective who had called on me in the state's prison. He stared hard at me, then came forward, called me the name by which I had been known there, and gripped my hand. He invited me to the village wineshop to have a glass of wine, and at the table said he had not come to Sicily on business, but on a vacation, and to satisfy his curiosity as there was a rumor among the Italians in America that I had escaped death and that he had traced this rumor to two Italians who must have been the men I met in the moonlight on the road from the village one evening. He went on to say that I had nothing to fear should I return to America as I was officially dead, and that I, or rather a coffin containing a load of bricks, was buried in a cemetery near Boston, and that a headstone on the grave gave my name and the date of my death.

HE also said that he had been busy during the last few years investigating the great Italian society, of which I have spoken, and asked me whether I could account for this society's paying so much money in my interest, and so well looking after me. When I told him that I could not, he said that Pietro Antonelli had been a member of this society, but had given information regarding it to the police in New York. The society had condemned him to death and had offered a reward of ten thousand dollars to anyone who should make away with him; that by chance I either was, or was not, guilty of the death of Pietro. In either event, I was the innocent or guilty cause of his death, and the society in secret conclave had agreed to use every effort to save my life, and to provide for my future.

IT was for that reason, I learned thus for the first time that such timely aid had been given me when I was in, a hopeless position. Since the members of the society wanted Antonelli killed, and as the court said I was his murderer, they decided to give me the help they would have given had I been their paid assassin. No wonder I was confused and amazed at the time, as I had no idea why any one should have enough interest in me to carry out dangerous plans to save my life. Now the words of the detective cleared up the mystery and made plain to me the tangled threads of the whole affair — an affair so strange and bewildering that even now I can hardly make myself believe that I lived through the frightful ordeal. It is all like a nightmare, but a nightmare every word of which is true. How I wish it weren't true. How I wish I could tell you it is a dream. But no. The horror of that experience is still too vivid, to make me doubt it.

That is all of my story. The judge who presided at my trial, the district attorney who prosecuted me, the warden of the state's prison, and most of the witnesses to my execution are dead. I am an old man, and as so many people who knew of my death and condemnation have passed away, I have decided to break the silence of many years and to give to the world this story of my resurrection.

The electrician turned to the man in the mask. "He is alive!" he said

The Freak They Bought

As told by
DR. B. M. WARREN
to
STUART PALMER

The "professor" seated himself upon the Human Rod's abdomen. "See," he repeated, "he neither bends nor sags"

"BUT, good heavens, man, it's horrible! It's unspeakable," said Lentz. "Imagine a world wherein every living person is unable to bend. A world of walking-sticks! A world of statues—living, breathing, thinking—but so solidified that only the very extremities are flexible. It's an epidemic, I tell you. Four bodies—and all the same. God above! Even I, a doctor, hardly can believe my own senses."

Manfred Lentz, dean of American alienists, drew a trembling hand across his brow. The others in Lentz's room in the hotel sat awed and white of face, as the facts were presented to them. None dared utter his thoughts.

Lentz had called us away from the rather desultory meetings of the American Medical Association downstairs to consult with him on this strange thing that had come to the attention of all of us. It was a noteworthy group of scientists gathered in the room of the great New York hotel. Besides Lentz, who is known as a master wherever advanced research is pursued, there was Paul Leroy, senior attending surgeon at the Polyclinic hospital in Philadelphia, Dr. Karl Ernst, at the time connected with the medical school of the University of Wisconsin, and Dr. Jo Jastron, of the psychology department of the same university. By virtue of the fact that I myself have made some successful researches in the anatomical field, and because one of the bodies—that of Alvin Fairly—of which Lentz spoke had been in my laboratory in Chicago, I also was a member of the group, and, I, too, spoke of the menace of the strange disease.

It was Jastron who broke the silence.

"You're right," he said gravely. "This malady may be as contagious as small pox. It may be anything. If we five doctors have four such amazing cases at almost the same moment, who knows how many others there may be? Who knows how many persons are carrying the germs in a torpid form? In the cause of humanity, if for no other reason"—his voice grew desperate—"we must find out what it is, isolate the germ, strive to combat this terrible scourge. A world of human walking-sticks? It's ghastly."

"What's to be done? There's no time to be lost. This thing may sweep the country." Leroy was a man of action.

"FIRST, let us agree on the facts," Lentz proposed. "The body each of you gentlemen received came by express. Is that right?"

We nodded.

"And upon delivery each paid from eight hundred to a thousand dollars. Correct?"

Again we nodded.

"All right. Let me go over the rest of the facts. Each body came to you in a plain board coffin. Each showed little more than the usual condition of *rigor mortis*—such a condition as led you to believe the strange rigidity had existed only prior to death. Each of you, by dissection, attempted to find the cause. You were unable to locate it. That, in effect, was my experience. Is that true of all of you?"

Again we nodded, too stunned to say a word..

Then Jastron, the cautious one, spoke.

"Of course," he said, "we may be drawing the worst possible conclusions from all this. Perhaps these four men whose bodies we studied were only freaks. There

Doctors, who feared an epidemic that would turn men into living statues, were dupes in a strange swindle by a man who preyed on their scientific curiosity

FOUR TIMES

are bearded ladies in this country, yet no one fears an epidemic of hirsute femininity. In working on this case of pre-mortem rigidity, I made a full microscopic analysis, and found no symptom of germ life—"

"Anyway," broke in Lentz, "it's something absolutely new, and outside the present knowledge of our science. Each of you saw the disease when the victim was alive. And in each case he died shortly after. None of us has known of this for more than two years. The effects are fatal.

"GENTLEMEN, we cannot let this drift. I warn you, if I am right in my conclusions, this disease will sweep the country. In a few generations not only men and women, but little children, will have contracted it—become unable to bend, sway along like automatons when they walk, hideous creatures as stiff and brittle as broomsticks. How could they longer accustom themselves to this world in which we live? Beds, chairs, seats—why, good Lord! gentlemen—the insidious death that comes creeping upon the victims after all would bring only happy release."

"Do you think we ought to say anything about it to the meeting downstairs?" I asked. "I hate to admit I've been defeated."

"I believe we ought," Jastron broke in. "Maybe someone has come up against the same problem and solved it. At least, let us discuss the problem. It is a puzzle—and we must share puzzles. Individual pride does not matter at a time like this."

With that agreement, our meeting broke up. I confess I was loath to follow Jastron's suggestion, for there is a rivalry among medical men and it was due indirectly to that rivalry that I had become acquainted with the strange case of Alvin Fairly, for I had wanted to spring a bombshell at that very meeting of the Medical Association and win a name for myself by telling them I had discovered the cause of a most unusual and hitherto unknown disease. And the dead body of Alvin Fairly was to have been the instrument that would bring me that fame.

I first saw Fairly when I was practicing in Chicago. It was one bleak January afternoon, when a cold, raw wind swept the Lake with its biting, stinging blast, that Jim Love, a former patient of mine, dropped into the office.

"Nobody's coming in on a day like this, Doc," Jim said. "Drop your books and come with me. I've got something to show you."

IT was nearing four o'clock. Darkness was setting in early. Only one other patient had been to see me that afternoon and the office was getting on my nerves. I was glad of the invitation. I clapped on my hat and coat and followed.

The man took me to a dime museum on South State street. It was small and of the usual questionable type, housing a motley crew of snake-charmers, fat women, and other common monstrosities. I felt disgusted when we entered, and turned to my companion with a word of censure. He held up his hand.

"Just a minute, Doc!" he pleaded. "If you're not interested in this one,

"But it's horrible," the awed doctors were told. "Imagine a world peopled by men so solidified they cannot bend or stoop."

the dinner's on me." He pulled me forward as he spoke.

The room held light enough to display the freaks on their platforms. It was at that moment that the "professor" was explaining the queerest person I ever saw. His voice was raucous.

"Here, ladies and gentlemen," he said, "is Franz Albert, the Human Rod. He neither bends nor stoops. He cannot tie his shoes, pick up his hat, or lift a pin from the floor. He is rigid from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. He cannot sit; he cannot lie. His meals are taken from a shelf. From far Bavaria"—I learned later it was really from San Francisco—"he comes. Gaze upon this unfortunate man, ladies and gentlemen, and give him your pity. For never again will you find as strange a case as the one of Franz Albert—" And so on.

I STARED skeptically. The man appeared to be about thirty years old. Tall and thin as a rail, his anaemic features betokened to me that his body might be host to a disease. But I stood in a museum. I could not forget that.

"It's a trick," I said scoffingly to my companion.

"It's no trick," he returned. "Wait!"

Eager, curious faces about me turned toward the tiny stage. I, too, gazed at it. Franz Albert—or Alvin Fairly, as I was to know him—was moving. He did not walk. He did not turn his head or lift his hands. He moved with a queer, angular, swaying motion, for, while his body seemed absolutely stiff, there was a slight give to his hip bones, though his knees were utterly rigid. Thus he swayed from side to side, moving forward an inch at a time—a clock-like rhythm, as though a mechanical man had been wound up and set going.

But it was the ensuing action that interested me. The "professor" caught him about the waist. Moving him as you might move a hatrack, the "professor" laid him across two chairs, one at his head, the other at his feet. There the strange man lay, like a suspension bridge. But that was not all. With a short preliminary speech, the "professor"—a two-hundred pounder—quickly seated himself on Albert's abdomen. Albert's eyes blinked rapidly, but he remained rigid.

"See," the professor said, "he neither bends nor sags."

I could not believe my vision.

"It's a trick," I said doggedly.

"It's no trick, I tell you," my companion snapped. "Go up and see."

I could not do that. The dignity of my profession forbade. But the case intrigued me. If the Human Rod were real, here was something that the medical profession should know about. I always have been interested in cases of variations from the norm. It is through such cases that the doctor can shed light on the problems of scientific physiology. Albert's condition fascinated me. I could not draw myself away. Were I to find him authentic, and discover the reason for his abnormality, what a name I would make for myself among my colleagues!

The crowd moved on. The lights about Albert's little stage snapped off as those of the next platform flashed on. Quickly I went to talk with him. He was agreeable, telling me his name and where he lived. His jaws could move but a little, and his words were hardly audible. According to his story, he had been rigid since birth. It was uncomfortable for him to lie horizontally. No position seemed right for him except a perpendicular one, in which he even slept.

While to any outward appearance there was nothing structurally wrong with him, somehow the balance of his whole nervous system seemed to have been grievously displaced. He said he could not lean against a pillar or wall, nor anything else. He became faint if he did. He told me he lived like an unbending cornstalk, alone, apart from the world which other mortals with flexible bodies had built for themselves.

The interview proved enlightening. Franz Albert, the Human Rod, seemed true enough. Still, I did not want to be hasty. I left the museum intending to make a later appointment with him, when I would propose that he come to my office where I would examine him thoroughly, at my leisure.

Of course, I realized that even were I to locate the seat of his trouble, he hardly would let me treat him for it. It was his manner of living, and were I to cure him, he would be cut off from a very lucrative career. But, as an example of nervous abnormality of some sort, he was of priceless scientific value and, though I tried to curb my enthusiasm, I was much pleased for having learned of him.

As far as my investigation was concerned, however, it was unfortunate that the next day I was summoned as a consulting alienist in a famous murder case. The trial dragged on for weeks. When at last it was finished, and I found my time my own again, I hurried back to the museum, anxious to meet Albert, and examine him.

But my bird had flown. They told me the Human Rod had moved on toward the West Coast. I understand now that freaks of his type work on a circuit much as do vaudeville and burlesque performers. At any rate, the "professor" told me Franz Albert would not return to the museum for a long time—perhaps never.

It was disappointing. Professionally, I felt distressed over it. Perhaps I showed it in my face, for after studying me curiously the "professor" suddenly remarked:

"His old man's in town, if that'll do you any good. His name's August Fairly. He's over at the Brinton hotel. He might help you."

His father? That was luck. I jumped into a cab, ordered the driver to hurry; and settled back to restrain my impatience as well as I might.

I FOUND August Fairly, father of the Human Rod, just in time. His thick, heavy body, his piercing black eyes, together with the heavy black beard covering his face, made me think of a butcher. I didn't like him. But I had to speak quickly, for already he had packed his belongings, and was ready to start for the West to join his son. When I explained my mission and the desire to examine his son, he shook his head.

"He ain't comin' back to Chicago, Doc," he said sadly, but with nothing of the Bavarian accent in his speech. "He's got a bad case of T. B. The doctor says he's got less than a year to live. He might go to Denver—I dunno. The only reason he showed here was that we need money."

Money! That put an idea into my head.

"How much do you need?" I asked.

A crafty expression developed behind that black beard, and suddenly the man's eyes closed to slits.

"How much?" he countered. "What's your proposition?"

I made a quick decision.

"Your son is an interesting medical case," I said. "Since he hasn't long to live, I'd like to examine his body after death. It hardly will involve more than the brain, I presume. It's a common thing—to make an examination of this kind, for it's little more than the usual autopsy often performed after death."

The man eyed me narrowly. He was not at all abashed by my proposal. More than ever I thought of him as a butcher, surrounded by red meat stacked behind a counter.

"How much would you pay?" His words were gutturally crisp.

"Two hundred dollars, now," I replied; "five hundred more when I receive the body. After the examination,

I'll return the body or dispose of it myself, as you wish."

He hesitated, thinking.

"If you need money," I said, "here it is. It will help your son in the last few months of his life. He need not know what will happen afterward."

With a shrug of his shoulders, August Fairly reached graspingly for my check. He signed an agreement, giving me the right to perform a post-mortem examination on his son's body in my own laboratory. But not before he had bargained. The final terms were five hundred dollars down and seven hundred dollars to be paid on delivery of the body. Even so, I went out of the hotel feeling well pleased with myself. What if it was more than I readily could afford? My report to the Medical Association would be unique!

A year and two months went by. But for the occasional appearance of that signed agreement among papers on my desk, the case might have been forgotten—for all I ever heard from August Fairly or his strange and unusual son. Then, one day, I got a shock.

A truck backed up to my door. From it, a large packing case was dumped into my office. The expressman told me there was a C. O. D. charge on it of seven hundred and thirty-eight dollars.

C. O. D. Collect on Death!

The words seemed to ring over and over in my brain as I tackled that box with my hammer and chisel after the expressman had gone.

Great was my enthusiasm. Here was my opportunity to startle the medical world. Here was the body of Alvin Fairly, the Human Rod, at last. Impetuously, I dashed off a telegram to a colleague and rival. He was Doctor Ernst. All I said in that message was:

"Will have startling report to publish at Society meeting. Congratulate me."

THE box I opened contained an inner one. It was a cheap coffin. I ripped that open. Forgive me when I say I was overjoyed to find the body there. This was a scientific exploration. The young man no longer would need that earthly shell. While there is life, a doctor will serve efficiently and well in keeping the vital spark alight. But once life has departed, the body becomes to the scientist a field for exploration, an unknown province, whose strange organisms will tell him secrets he is eager to learn.

The corpse was not embalmed. Whether or not Albert Fairly had died of tuberculosis, I was not then prepared to say. But it was apparent he had wasted away considerably since I had seen him in the State street museum. In fact, I hardly recognized the body as his. But that did not matter. His father's name appeared on the tag, and that was sufficient for me.

I took the body to the laboratory. A superficial examination showed no signs of tuberculosis. But I was not interested so much in that as in dissecting and studying the brain, where I believed the seat of the trouble lay. I do not wish to weary you with scientific terms. Suffice it to say I entertained two theories. One, that pressure on the brain had developed some strange, unusual paralysis of the body, which caused the man to remain upright rather than sending him to his bed. The other, that his equilibrium had been destroyed, and that sometime during his life his body had taken on a fixed poise from which he could not afterwards release himself.

THE latter theory appealed to me most. It was the one on which I began examination. There are, you probably remember from your school days, two tiny cavities in the inner ear, partially filled with a colorless fluid. This fluid is so adjusted to the nerves that it gives a sensation of balance to the person. If the fluid is set in motion, the balance nerves are upset and the person becomes dizzy. I started to examine these cavities.

I first dissected the inner right ear. I worked slowly and carefully, checking each move, noting my results. Finally, after a week of the most intense study, I quit in consternation. There was absolutely nothing wrong. The body before me was normal in every respect. I had gone over every minute tissue exactingly. I couldn't understand it.

August Fairly had bargained over the price for his son's body; then graspingly reached for the check

Temporarily discouraged and disappointed, I wandered about my laboratory. My hope of approbation from my colleagues was shattered. Not only would I have no report to carry to the Medical Association meeting, but I cursed myself for the haste in which I had sent that bragging telegram to Dr. Ernst.

My mail lay untouched on a table by the door. I hardly had eaten or slept in that week. My clothes were soiled, my face was unshaved. I appeared a most disreputable person.

But what was the matter with the case? Surely, Alvin Fairly had been rigid enough in the museum. His condition had seemed genuine. Was it some strange malady that held the human sufferer bound in life, to release him too late when the candle of life was snuffed out?

If it were, then here before me was one of the strangest, most astounding cases I had ever heard of. Here was incongruity. Here was a paradox. *Rigor mortis*—the rigidity of death—that strange fixity of the human body when it is "cold"—had reversed itself into the rigidity of life. And only with the fleeting breath there fled the terrible condition in which the living had found himself. From a scientific standpiont, it was amazing. Here, before me, was the body. Somewhere within it was locked the secret. Where?

Spurred by this new thought, I was about to return to my laboratory when my gaze wandered to the table on which lay my unopened mail. A letter topping the heap caught my attention. The familiar handwriting of Ernst, my friend at Wisconsin! What would it say? Would he jeer at me? Would he laugh? Had he already guessed my exploration so far had been a failure?

I caught up the letter. It was brief.

"Dear Warren," it read. "Glad to hear you are on the track of something big. Dr. Jastron, of the psychology department, has been working with me on the particularly interesting case of a man who suffered from complete pre-mortem rigidity. I surmise a nervous disease. Will write more when I have results."

PRE-MORTEM rigidity? That was my case. It staggered me! Another one like mine! Ernst had stumbled on it somewhere. What did it mean? Was the malady spreading?

I knew Ernst was one of the most acute men in our field. Nothing in the world could slip by him. Besides, he had Jastron working with him. Jastron was reputed the greatest psychologist in abnormalities in this country.

The letter pricked me into new effort. With fresh energy, I rushed back to my laboratory table. I stared at the partly dissected cadaver. Somewhere, somehow, I had slipped up. Some tiny detail, some malformation of nervous structure, had escaped me.

Into the waste-basket went my notes. Feverishly I set to work again. The left side of the head was untouched. Perhaps there I would find the base of the whole thing. I'd die, rather than have Ernst succeed where I had failed. Good friend that he was, to know that he and Jastron worked on a case similar to mine was torment. I must reach the goal first. To fail now, would be to brand myself as incompetent. I must not fail!

Another intense week followed. How meticulously I traced out the intricacies of Alvin Fairly's structure. Day passed into night and night to day again. I did not note the passing hours. Ardently I worked. Check and recheck. Notation. Recheck again. Not the least thing must escape me now.

Painstakingly, I kept on. My examination drew to a close. Why, why could I not find the secret? The body before me was absolutely normal. As far as my medical knowledge and science could determine, Alvin Fairly had been a normal man. I tossed away my instruments in despair. Disgust seized me. The Human Rod had been a fake, an impostor, after all. My wrath arose.

And yet—I had seen the evidence with my own eyes. Even as I talked with him, I recalled, there had not been the slightest relaxation of his body. He was not a fake. Besides, Ernst had found another case. Two men hardly could be fakes. Two men hardly could simulate that terrible rigidity so entirely. Ernst could not be tricked, too. I had the greatest faith in Ernst. Yet, I had failed.

IN the month that remained before the meeting of the American Medical Association, I went through my duties in a routine way. For the moment every vestige of scientific enthusiasm had left me. Ernst and Jastron were succeeding where I had lost. I could see Ernst as he met me.

"Ho, there, old fellow," he'd say jovially, "I've made a great discovery. A remarkable discovery. How about you?"

And I would have to tell him I had failed.

I could not go to the meeting. I could not face my colleagues, with only failure to report. I would stay away, find some excuse. July was too hot—that would serve. I could not stand the heat in July.

But that would be runninga way—cowardly. I finally resolved to face it out. Then, too, I was obsessed with curiosity to learn what Ernst had found, what I had missed in my searching examination.

I found Ernst with Jastron at a hotel. They both seemed a little strained in their greeting to me. My sensitiveness attributed it to their success and the great results they meant to announce on the morrow.

But Ernst turned to me.

"What was the discovery you made, Warren? Any luck?" he asked casually.

I tried to be as casual.

"No. A most interesting case. But I spent two weeks in study and dissection and found nothing. Well—it was one of those things, you know."

He nodded. I tried to hide my eagerness.

"And you?" I asked. "You wrote about some case too. Ah—let me see—"

"No luck, either," he snapped. "Most baffling—eh, Jo?"

Jastron, the great psychologist, shook his head.

"We had every indication of a fascinating case," Jastron explained thoughtfully. "Examination showed everything normal. I never have been more disappointed." He looked at me. "What was the nature of your case, Doctor?"

At this turn of affairs my courage rose. If they were baffled, why need I longer hide my failure? I decided to let loose my bombshell.

"Pre-mortem rigidity," I said. "A man prior to death was completely stiff, unable to bend. At death the rigidity disappeared."

If you had jabbed Ernst and Jastron with needles, they could not have been more startled. They sat up as if galvanized.

"Rigidity?" cried Ernst. "Pre-mortem? Great heavens! A case like ours? And a negative result?"

I nodded.

"You can't mean it!" he exclaimed. "Let us discuss this thing."

A few sentences more sent us staggering. Suddenly we realized the immensity of the thing we had uncovered. It had a wider scope than any of us at first appreciated. Ernst rang for a bellboy, and sent a message to Leroy and Lentz, asking them to join us. He wanted them to hear our strange tale. Their (*Continued on page* 94)

THE STRANGEST STORY IN THE WORLD

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Typewrite your story on one side of the paper only.

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TELL only of odd and strange experiences that have actually happened, either to you or some one you know, because TRUE STRANGE STORIES Magazine wants only true stories.

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So—start right in to tell us the strangest experience you ever had!

I Was Held in the Grip of the Devil-Man

I visited Joseph in his tiny hut. He was squatting on the floor, looking curiously at me.

SOMETIMES I miss those silver-mooned velvet nights of my native land. Sometimes I grow weary of this unkind northern climate. Often in winter I stand at the window of the New York importing house where I am now employed and look out at the snow, covering the land like a winding-sheet.

At such times I imagine myself once more gazing over the miles and miles of white cloth sewed together to make a cool screen for the protection of the tender tobacco plants against insects. For, born and raised in Cuba, I never saw real snow until after my twenty-fifth year, and, even after several years, the sight seems strange to me.

Ah! But I prefer even this cold snow of the North to returning to my native land where I would be reminded of dread experiences which would shatter the nerves of most men. I would be reminded of terrible scenes as in a nightmare. Indeed, Don Esteban Valdez, the once-so-wealthy planter of the province of Pinar del Rio—he, I am sure, would call it a nightmare to this very day.

I can still see Don Esteban standing there at the moment of his downfall, hope gone from his aristocratic face. I can still see those frantic field-laborers and hear their eery yells like those of the wild dog. Once, sleeping

While His Serpent Slave Wove Its Weird Spell

Cursed by a Voodoo King

By RAMON LLADO
As told to BEN CONLON

"If I am Voodoo Doctor, what then?" he asked

in my comfortable New York apartment, I dreamed of those scenes back in Cuba. I awoke in a cold sweat to hear the hissing of serpents and to see the ugly head of a deadly *fer-de-lance* reared at me from the foot of my bedstead.

After this dream, I sprang up, shouting and shrieking so loud as to awaken my good wife. She gave me Baccardi in hot water, and calmed me, and told me that the serpent's hissing was but the noise of the warm radiator, and the thing at the bedstead nothing but my belt, which I had hung there when I retired. But most of the night I sat and smoked many cigarettes, for sleep was impossible.

Some day I shall make a trip to gay Habana. But I shall not go into the interior. The shock of places I once knew would be bad for my nerves and my heart, the doctor says. And I know well that this is so.

IT was some years ago that I was an assistant overseer at the vast sugar plantation of Señor Esteban Valdez in the province of Pinar del Rio, Cuba. My work there was not always congenial, but my position paid well for those days, for I was skilled in the languages, not only my native Spanish, but I could talk also to the *Americanos* who came to see Don Esteban and who scattered much gold for the product of his cane-fields. I knew also the French, and could give instructions in *patois* to the black Haytian laborers sometimes imported during the cane-cutting season.

Cuba is much larger than most *Americanos* realize, and it was my cruel fate to languish at one end of the island in the province of Pinar del Rio, while the lovely Conception, whom I sometime hoped to wed, was at the other end of the island, more than seven hundred miles away.

In order to forget my loneliness I threw myself into my work with great intensity that season. I supervised the field-laborers, and acted as timekeeper, as interpreter and as paymaster. There had been a bad drought that year. The spring rains, which usually begin about the fifteenth of May, had been late and scanty; and there was a shortage of native labor at the prices my employer wished to pay. Those Haytians we had were ignorant, primitive folk, but keen enough to be resentful of the stingy and imperious methods of Don Esteban. They mixed but poorly with the natives. Some were sullen, and some stole freely the residues of the sugar transformed into alcohol. But mostly they were good workers, these Haytians, experienced in the fields of other West Indian islands, and knew how to cut the cane skillfully—a most important thing, for land will continue to yield for from eight to over twenty years without replanting if the roots are not damaged.

But there were conflicts, and I recall that when I told off the laborers and ordered them to take up their shelter in the *barracons*, or huge sheds of flimsy structure, a great argument started between two of the men, and one giant laborer seized another by the throat and was throttling him badly when I rode up to interfere.

"WHAT is the matter here?" I demanded.

The giant who had been strangling the other let go his hold and grinned at me. The smaller man rubbed his badly clawed throat, and looked up at me. He was a Haytian whom we called Prosper, and who had previously seemed most orderly.

"I care not to live in the same *barracon* with this devil-man!" he exclaimed, as he pointed to his assailant. "He is evil. He practices the voodoo, master. He knows the serpents, and the greatest serpent of them all, Lucifer himself!"

Prosper's eyes goggled in fear. From time to time I had heard that some of the Haytians did practice a modified form of voodoo, but these were in the minority, and most of the natives had as great a horror of it as I could have myself. Of course I knew nothing of voodoo worship, except that it was still carried on in certain parts of the West Indies. Some of the more

friendly and intelligent Haytians of previous seasons had told me of the disgusting details of this degraded system of magic and witchcraft, which included devil-worship and snake-worship, and, in its most extreme forms, even cannibalism and human sacrifices. Thus far I had never seen evidences of this relic of African barbarism. I did not, perhaps, take the accusation of Prosper seriously, and I wished to show no partiality among the workers.

"Do not fear. He will not harm you further," I assured Prosper. And to the stalwart laborer whom Prosper had called a devil-man, I said: "And you must be peaceable. I will not allow fighting among the hands."

The "devil-man" looked at me out of muddy eyes which were not black, but bluish-gray. That he had some white blood in him was certain. Beneath the dark skin glowed a subcutaneous red. He stood there, six feet three or four of virility. His white cotton suit was soiled, and the sleeves had been either cut or torn away—the great bicep muscles rippled beneath his saddle-colored skin.

"But I do not fear his strength," Prosper persisted. "He is intimate with serpents! He caresses them and speaks with them. He charms them, and makes them do his evil will. He is unholy and unclean. I wish not to live under the same roof with him, Master. He would bring a curse."

THE devil-man—Joseph, we called him—grinned at me again, showing his large, square, white teeth. He did not deny the charge of Prosper.

"If I am voodoo doctor—what then?" he asked, shrugging his massive shoulders. "I am good worker. I have toiled in the fields of Hayti, of Martinique, of Trinidad. Is it that I shall live in one of the *bohios* (native huts) where I can be alone?—except that my friends shall be with me."

"Your friends?" I repeated.

"Yes, Master. His serpents, his devils," cut in Prosper.

Labor was scarce. I wished to satisfy both of the men and to be fair to both.

"You will go, then, to live in the *barracon*, Prosper," I decided, "and you, Joseph," I added, turning to the great devil-man with the body of a gorilla and seemingly the mind of a child, "may find shelter in the hut near the swamp."

I pointed in that direction, saying: "Go quickly now. And there shall be no more arguments, remember!"

I thought little more of the incident until I made a horseback round that evening to see that all of my charges were properly settled. I rode up to the little hut assigned to the mammoth Joseph, and, alighting from my horse, peered into the gloomy interior. There was no illumination except a greenish glow from an upturned glass bowl. I knew what the glow was. Joseph must have caught many of the *cocuyos*, or giant fireflies. Natives frequently claimed that many of these massed together were as good as a small candle, though I cannot attest the truth of this.

There was something eery about the gloomy place with that weird greenish glow. I sensed danger—or at least something odd—and I lighted my lantern before entering the hut.

"All is well, Joseph?" I inquired. Then I stepped back, startled at the scene before me. Joseph was squatting on the floor, fondling a huge snake. He looked up as I entered, but he kept his hands on the *maja*—a snake that is common in parts of Cuba, and which sometimes reaches a length of twenty feet. This one seemed even larger.

There are no poisonous snakes on the island of Cuba, or at least I have never seen or heard of any. The *maja* is harmless to humans despite its imposing size, and is not nearly as vicious as the smaller-sized *jubo*. But to see this stalwart man sitting with the reptile about his muscular body made my flesh creep. An overseer, however, must show no fear. I tried to speak casually.

"You have a strange companion, Joseph," I remarked.

Joseph continued to eat. He did not rise, as some of the more docile hands would have done at my entrance.

"Yes, master," he replied. "My friends soon find me. This one was on the roof of my hut. He is my friend."

I knew that the *maja* frequently lived in the palm-leaved thatches of old huts, and believed that Joseph's story might be true. I thought, however, that Joseph, whether devil-man, or voodoo doctor, or simply an ignorant field-hand with queer tastes, might bear watching.

"You are all right here?" I asked as I prepared to take my departure. The big snake commenced to move slowly about the man's body, and I was perilously close to having the creeps.

"Yes, Master, it is well with us."

Although I had little desire to be near the hut of Joseph after this incident, nevertheless my duties occasionally caused me to pass there at the end of the day, and once I saw Joseph bringing in several live bats from the jaguey tree nearby. The jaguey tree, which is parasitic, chokes the life from the ceiba tree which gives it birth. In the month of May it is often alive with bats, which feed upon its fruit. And now, beyond doubt, Joseph was taking in the bats to feed to his large snakes, for gossip among the natives now credited him with having several of them, and sometimes the stories told were fanciful in the extreme.

As I rode along, I thought of the odd spiral of death—the ceiba tree strangled by the jaguey, the fruit of the jaguey sucked lifeless by the bats, which in turn became the prey of the serpents. And would the serpents be fed only on bats? On what would they feed when the fruit disappeared, and the bats departed?

THE giant Joseph soon came to dominate many of the natives—his huge size, the legend that he was a voodoo doctor, his superhuman strength and his efficiency in the field, all these factors contributed to his position, I suppose.

That he rather enjoyed the prestige that the voodoo tradition gave him was evident. Some of the field-hands centered about him and regarded him as their leader, while others hardly would go near him. These latter feared him, and this, too, he enjoyed.

I sat before my quarters one evening, when I heard strange cries coming from the direction of the huts to the south of me.

"What are those noises, Pedro?" I asked my servant.

"Indeed, *Señor*, they sound like the *perro jibaro* (wild dog)," was the reply of Pedro. "And yet, too, it sounds like a woman. I shall see, *Señor*, and report to you."

But already the cries were coming nearer rapidly, and I could now make out the shrill words spoken in Spanish: "God help me! My unhappy child! Alas for me!"

Through the dusk I saw the form of a woman running—the wife of one of the Cuban servants, I discovered, as she came to me, wailing and sobbing.

"What is the trouble, Josefina?" I asked quickly.

"*Madre de Dios!* He has my baby! I missed my child, and there are those who have seen him carrying it. He will feed it to the great serpents, for he has many of them, *Señor*!"

The woman half-choked in a paroxysm of fear.

"Who has it?" I cried, although I believed I knew the answer.

"He that is called the devil-man; he who lives with serpents, *Senor*!"

Her wailing cries continued. Don Esteban, my employer, passed by at that moment, and must have heard the woman's explanation, but he showed no concern. He was a self-centered man, and (*Continued on page* 83)

STRANGE FACTS FROM LIFE

Bewildering things happen to people everywhere. Here are some strange events that have happened recently. The Editor of TRUE STRANGE STORIES will be glad to have readers contribute to this department stories of odd and unexpected experiences that are true

MORE or less frequently one reads of a man or woman who leaves the Biblical age far behind and lives to a "good old age" of from 100 to 110. However, any such are mere children compared to two men, one from the Near East and one from the Far East, the stories of whose amazing ages have stirred the interest of thousands in Europe and the Orient.

The first of these is the Kurd Zaro Aga—pensioner of the Turkish Government under a decree issued by President Kemal Pasha—who recently celebrated his 147th birthday.

The other is Li Ching Yun, the patriarch of the little village of Shang-chuan, in the province of Chenchuan, China, who is said to have attained the age of 250 years.

The history of the latter is far more remarkable than that of the Kurd, who spent 125 years of his life as a hod carrier, and now puffs his pipe in peace and quiet as a court attendant in Constantinople.

Li Ching Yun, according to persons who have seen this remarkable man, does not look his age, any more than the mummy of Tutankhamen appears to be 3,000 years old. The Chinese, who is said to have been born in the seventeenth year of the reign of Kang Hsi, one of the first of the Manchu emperors, gives the impression of a well preserved man of fifty, and is as active and full of life as normal men of that age. He is now married for the fourteenth time and his family embraces eleven generations and 180 descendants. Certain documents, records and scrolls appear to support his age claim.

DESPITE his advanced years and the fact that, according to his assertions, he has worked most of the time since he was ten, Li takes a walk of about ten English miles each day. The patriarch likes to tell of his youthful journeys through the provinces of China, through Thibet, the mystery country, and through the jungles of Annam, Siam and the deserts of Manchuria. In the more than two centuries since he made these visits, the means of travel in the interior has not changed, he declares, being practically the same as they have been for thousands of years. His brief and picturesque advice to those who would live to a very old age is, "Sleep like a dog, sit like a tortoise, keep a quiet heart and walk sprightly, like a pigeon."

Skeptics who have questioned the officials and mandarins of the village of Shang-chuan concerning Li's age have been told that their grandfathers knew their venerable townsman when they were little boys.

Like Li, the aged Kurd Zaro Aga has a keen memory and likes to discuss the past, particularly his experiences with his ten wives.

"I was eighteen when I married the first time," he relates. "My first wife's name was Sinem Hanoum, and we lived happily together until she died. I was forty-two then and had been made the chief of the Sultan's hod-carriers on the Serask Tower. I was fairly prosperous and decided to take three wives when I married again. Their names were Zeinab, Genre and Hadje.

"One of them ran away and I took two more wives, Hanif and Hati, four being the number allowed under the Mohammedan law. The last of these died when I was ninety-eight and after that I took only one at a time. The seventh was Fatima, the eighth another Hanif, the ninth another Zeinab. When the latter died I married my present wife, Kudret."

Questioned concerning the number of his children, he said he could not recall, but it was between eighteen and twenty-five. As to the number of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren he had lost count completely. Questioned concerning his recipe for longevity, he said:

"I have none. But I have always lived simply. I eat very little meat and never touched coffee or spirits, which are forbidden by my religion. Most always my daily fare has consisted of rice, bread, butter, soup, milk and sweets. I am particularly fond of the latter."

Zaro Aga's wife is much younger than he, being but sixty-five; but he says he is certain to outlive her.

A Strange Find

TALES told concerning the finding of the world's largest and most precious gems usually are fantastic, bizarre and—untrue. The very nature of the jewels encourages romancing, and most facts concerning their original discovery soon are befogged with fiction, which is multiplied with each retelling. However, this story concerning the finding and history of the famous Cullinan, the world's greatest diamond, is absolute fact and, therefore, more strange than had it been given a weird twist.

Many persons know that generally diamonds are unearthed only after painstaking effort. Usually the blue clay, in which the gems are found most frequently, must be dragged from the deepest mines and spread upon the ground for many months before it can be crushed, ground and sifted effectively. Yet the yield of diamonds taken from the clay is only about one-quarter of a carat for each twenty cubic feet of earth.

Imagine doing this laborious work for twenty years and then suddenly finding the world's largest diamond. That odd turn of fortune happened to the aged inspector who uncovered the Cullinan. He had been watching the blue clay being loaded into the wagons at the top of the mine shaft. His task appeared deadly and endless. Day after day, load after load, passed on. At times he became tired and looked from the wagons to the ground. One day he did this. He noted a curiously shaped stone. Idly he picked it up and scraped away the dirt. A diamond! Eagerly he tore away the remaining bits of clay. He stood with pulses pounding and mind uncertain. If that mass only were pure diamond.

Then he ran with his find to the office. But even the mine owners could not be certain. Then experts began studying the stone. They found it was of fine white

color, with but a single flaw near the surface which was easily removed. But—no one could wear a diamond which weighed a pound and a third. It would have to be cut up.

The first cutting split the giant crystal into two parts, one weighing 1,977 carats and the other 1,040 carats. Cutters set to work and out of the diamond mass that was the Cullinan they cut two of the greatest gems in the world; one the Cullinan II, a square-cut brilliant weighing 309 carats, the other the pear-shaped "Star of South Africa," which weighs 516 carats.

Transvaal politicians and others purchased the jewels for $750,000 and presented them to the late King Edward VII of Britain. The smaller stone was fitted into the royal crown beside the famed Kohinoor, and the "Star" was set in the top of the British scepter.

Another astounding thing was that out of the remainder of the original mass, no less than 100 diamonds, large and small, were cut, the bulk of them finding their way into the crown jewel collections of various great nations.

But there is an even more amazing angle to the story of the great Cullinan. This gem, which was four inches long, two and one-half inches wide and about two inches thick, was found in 1906. To the experts, the Cullinan obviously was a split or cleavage from some greater jewel. The belief was mathematically demonstrable.

One side of the Cullinan must have fitted some other jewel, for it was a clean break, such as the diamond cutter makes when he splits a gem. But in this case nature had done the cleaving. And what was more exciting was that the lines of the other sides of the big diamond made it positive that the gem from which it had been struck off was many times larger. A search through the South African field for the "larger diamond" has been going on ever since without success. Perhaps, some day, another half dozing inspector will discover it.

Where Love Is Sold

THE moon-bathed beaches of Nicaragua are studded with their myriad-colored shells, but more numerous than the shells are the enamoured couples who sit side by side along the shore, breathing the delicate perfumes of the semi-tropical plants and the saltiness of the seas.

Since "bebedizo," the strange love philter, was discovered, new life has come to the Central Americas; for bebedizo, many believe, transmits to him who takes it a new, enlightened appreciation of love. The natives have come to regard it sacredly—to them it represents a new life.

In the woodland fastnesses of the Nicaraguas, the Woolwas Indians indulge in their sacred rite; under the soothing influence of moonlight, the natives plan their ghastly ritual. Fires are lighted, and the herbs and bushes which are to be used are gathered in huge piles—the ash from these constitutes the basis for bebedizo. The activities begin, the natives deck themselves in costume and begin their slow, monotonous march about the fire. The flames leap higher and higher, the sparks spitting themselves into the tree-tops; as the ash begins to settle, the natives bring forth their human sacrifice—one of their own people who must serve as a burnt offering so that the bebedizo will be effective. As the ritual proceeds, the girl—it is law among the Woolwas that the offering shall always be a girl—writhes helplessly, tugging at her bonds and moaning softly. As the flames lick hungrily at her bared limbs, the girl relaxes, sinking—so they say—into a blissful coma which is marked no longer by either pain or fear. The fire dies, and the ash is carefully carried away.

Bebedizo is a deadly poison, if taken in quantities, and its effect upon the constitution, even in small portions, is destructive. Laws have been enacted prohibiting its sale or use, yet bebedizo continues to be distributed.

A One Family Town

MRS. ANTONIA FERNANDEZ, the mother of the village of Ferrol, Spain, died recently at the age of ninety-seven in the neighboring village of San Jorge. She is survived by five children, the youngest of whom is fifty, thirty grandchildren, forty-eight great-grandchildren, five grandchildren in law and thirty-seven other relatives. The total for the family is 125, or the complete population of the village. For many years she had officiated as the final authority in the place, settling all disputes, fixing prices at which the products raised on the farms should be sold and supervising other business. Her consent had to be obtained before any of the clan married and she presided at all christenings and helped care for the ill. Over her tomb this inscription has been placed: "Here lies the honored mother of a whole village."

A Phantom City

THE "Silent City of Alaska," near Wrangell—believed, but not proved to be, a mirage—which now and then appears above the great Muir glacier, has been seen several times of late by tourists from the decks of steamships. The phantom city of the air looks like an ancient fortified city, with spires and towers, suspended some distance above the glacier.

Its appearance usually is preceded by a streak of variously hued mist along the horizon where two currents of air from opposite directions are believed to meet. When the mist begins to dissolve, the magic city begins to lift itself in the distance, gradually increasing its formation, like a motion picture being focused upon a screen. Once, the phantom appeared reversed, so the city as seen was upside down, the towers and minarets seeming to dip toward the sea.

A Magic Gold Finder

MEN under the command of George Williams, in Ancon, Panama, who have had considerable success finding buried treasure by using his "scientific gold finder," have decided to delve into the ruins of old Puerto Bello, which Sir Henry Morgan, the famous pirate, sacked.

Williams guards closely the secret of his curious gold finding machine, which many of the residents of Panama consider a magic delving rod.

After a previous effort to find the buried treasure of Puerto Bello, Williams took from the ruins of Castillo de San Geronimo, the place where the Spanish Governor resisted until death against Morgan's buccaneers, considerable church plate of silver and gold.

Included in the find was a silver bell seventeen inches high and there also was a miniature altar of solid gold two feet, three inches in height, and a crown of silver and gold. Finds in other parts of the ruins included silver vases, jugs and trays.

Williams put his gold finder to work recently in old Panama. However, he had scarcely begun unearthing treasure when he was compelled by the government to stop, the State claiming the land on which he worked.

As soon as he has concluded his present effort, he intends to search for a golden image of the Virgin Mary, supposed to have been hidden in old Panama when Morgan attacked the city. It once reposed in St. Jose Church and Williams believes it lies hidden near that institution.

Many requests have come to Williams to disclose the mystery of the gold-finder's properties. He prefers, however, to keep the explanation to himself until the time when his claims for it will be more substantiated and he has found more buried treasure.

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The Bleeding Mummy

(*Continued from page* 45)

house was without guests. The thing baffled him hugely, I could see. Unpleasantly, he suspected his niece of taking the scarab. But she indignantly denied the accusation. Chief among his suspicions was Olive's extraordinary interest in that particular beetle. She invited Claude Fenwick down to make her a sketch of it. And she talked constantly about it—too much, as if it were an obsession with her.

"I went down to the house, dolled up in a right impressive, gray-bearded make-up, as a French scientist. I met the girl at dinner. What balked me was, why should she steal the thing? Her uncle would have given it to her gladly. She had only to speak. Why all the secrecy and the pains to take it, like a common thief?

"I COULDN'T read her. At first, I set her down for a girl with a dual personality; a charming, intelligent, desirable member of society by day; and a prowling little minx of pronounced, inhibited, criminal tendencies by night. Ultimately, I reluctantly diagnosed her as an odd, pathological twist, a crooked, blighted branch on a fine old family tree."

He paused.

"But I was wrong, Steevie. That wasn't the answer to the riddle. To this day, I'm still in the dark. For this is what actually happened. You can make your own deduction if there is anything solid to pin a finding to—after I'm finished."

Something in Gresham's manner forbade Allenby's usual rough-and-ready repartee. Yet under his slap-stick glibness of tongue Allenby concealed an earnest enthusiasm for all things mysterious or crime-touched. And Gresham stood for the mastery of these self-same things. So Allenby bit his waggish tongue for once.

"I decided to watch Olive Palgrave that night. She had seemed unusually animated and excited at the table, as if urged by something stronger than her usual buoyant self. In fact, I felt that the girl was in the grip of something which would bear surreptitious watching. She retired early as we were supposed to do. But Palgrave and I took up our position outside her apartment, hidden within an embrasure on the hall that offers a view of her corridor door, as well as that corridor segment leading from her apartment to Palgrave's pet store-house of quaint and storied historical vertu.

"To placate Palgrave concerning her act, I intimated that she might be an intermittent sleep-walker, carrying out, boldly enough in slumber, the inhibition of her conscious mind. In other words, while walking asleep she might craftily and cannily purloin some object which had dominated her waking hours. But Olive Palgrave had no reason to steal an ancient scarab while asleep. It would have been hers for the asking.

"We waited in the darkness of the embrasure. Shortly after midnight her sitting-room door opened cautiously."

Gresham paused for so long that Allenby became impatient.

"Yes?" he prompted at last. Gresham continued:

"Olive stood on the threshold, with the bright light of a high-power reading-lamp turned on full at one side. She'd flung on an ivory-tinted bathrobe bound by a broad band about her waist. There were sandals on her bare feet—silver sandals. A fine silk net was slipped over her unruly, bobbed hair, slicking it down close to her head. Her hair was a coppery tint that sometimes accompanies her odd amber-hued eyes and her dead white skin. I've never seen a whiter skin on anything alive. It has a corpselike pallor—almost waxen. It's an odd twist of coloring.

"She stood on the threshold, stiff and erect, in her tightly bound white dressing-gown. Her eyes were wide open. Something about the light seemed to make the amber in them glow like living gold. Odd sensation. Illusion of lighting, of course. . . . She stood there rigid, skeleton-straight, a characteristic also of somnambulism. Her right hand was clutched at her throat. Even now I can see the odd, awkward angularity of the elbow-joint, as it projected at a queer position from her body. The other hand hung down straight. Even that gave me the sensation of uncommon angularity and rigidity. About the wrist, strung on a band of dull porcelain, the lost scarab gleamed out with a metallic, basilisk stare! She had set it truly as the old Egyptians were wont to do—was wearing it as an amulet, the symbol of resurrection. She appeared to be listening. We clung to the shadows of the embrasure, scarcely daring to breathe. Palgrave put out his big hand and clutched me by the shoulder until his grip bit into the flesh like the jaws of a steel trap.

"THE light flared full upon her. We could see with perfect clarity. There was no chance to explain, by the lighting or the shadows, the sinister thing which occurred before our very eyes."

"Yes?" prodded Allenby. "Go on. Spill it."

"As I sit here, Steevie, I saw—" He paused. "I know it sounds rankly improbable. But as Olive Palgrave stood there, the normal, extraordinary pallor of her skin began to change subtly, surely, uncannily. Its blonde whiteness faded, or seemed to be touched by some impossible shadowy ray. Slowly the white of her skin blurred to amber, like her eyes, from amber to a coffee hue, from a coffee to a sepia, and from a sepia to a dun, leathery brown. As the transformation took place, before our very eyes, the fresh, fair, healthy, girlish skin seemed to shrivel, to cling to the bones. And her eyes became sunken in the sockets and glazed like yellow glass.

"'Great God!' I heard Palgrave mutter. 'Am I losing my senses? What's happening? Where's Olive? There's a brown thing in the cerements of death standing there where—where she was!'

"And he spoke the truth. For instead of fair-skinned Olive Palgrave, there now confronted us a being, wearing the clothes she had worn, but how changed! We beheld a hovering creature like a living mummy, wrinkled and dried of skin. Only the hair shone forth with a live, metallic luster, from under the silk net which bound it close to the wrinkled, leathery brow.

"With a muttered gasp Palgrave stepped forward. I could hear him breathing heavily. But I pulled him back. Somehow I felt that some inexplicable trick of resurrection or metamorphosis had been played upon me by the art of some incomparably clever conjurer. I had the baffled feeling that the girl Olive had been whisked out of sight by some sinister sleight-of-hand—had been replaced with this dried-up effigy, dolled up in her own death-suggesting clothes."

"Sure!" cut in Allenby. "The Olive branch sneaked in somebody done up in a peacherino of a make-up to throw a scare into you. Probably saw through your disguise and was ready for you."

"WAIT!" commanded Gresham. "I thought that myself for an instant—a paralyzing second. Then the figure came forward with angular, jerky, syncopated steps. With this odd, ungainly, spasmodic stride it sort of half hopped, half walked down the corridor straight for that room—the room of the relics. I acted like lightning to get to the bottom of the riddle, to show up the trick that was being pulled for my express benefit and bafflement.

"'Palgrave,' I whispered, 'keep her in sight. I'll give her apartment the once-over.'

"Palgrave tiptoed down the corridor after that stiff-loping figure. I entered her sitting-room. I searched it. I went into the sleeping-chamber and the bathroom. Everything intimated only a conventional and entirely proper retiring, such as you would expect of any young girl. The bed showed the print of the head and the body. I touched the sheet and the cases. Still warm. Nowhere else, in those dainty rooms, was there a sign of any lurking, laughing, impish face, surreptitiously spying on the antics she had been maneuvering. I could take my oath on it. There was no one there.

"I returned to the corridor. It lay in light shadows. There was a full moon. There are two windows cutting its length between the girl's room and the chamber of relics. Palgrave stood on the threshold, his body half inserted, peering in. A low light showed inside. It hadn't glimmered there before. The brown creature had evidently turned it on. I could see Palgrave's fist, the knuckles sticking out white through its heavy coat of tan. His big scarab ring gleamed dully on the little finger. His face was as white as the coverlets of the oddly vacated dainty brass bed, with its occupant strangely gone. I stood beside him in the space of seconds."

Steven Allenby followed intently. The mocking raillery had gone from his eyes, leaving them unusually serious.

"She was in the chamber of relics, this parched, brown, wrinkled being. She went forward, straight as a dart, propelled by that ungraceful, halting hop. She brought out a key from the band that held the dressing-gown to her. She loped over to the case of the scarabs, opened it. With

those twiglike fingers she plucked off the scarab from the porcelain amulet, and returned it to its snuggery inside the case. She faced about, but it was more like the hop of some bird or dancing skeleton than it resembled anything human. I debated with myself, holding Palgrave back. Should I go forward, grasp that brown shoulder and demand an explanation for the thing I had witnessed? But I couldn't rid myself of the notion that whatever stood before us was really sleep-walking. And you know the alleged danger of startling or rousing a somnambulist from that unnatural state. It might prove fatal. On the other hand, if this was some curious, projected trick—

"THE light blinked out. There was a slight rustle. Like a couple of schoolboys fleeing from some bogy in the dark, Palgrave and I hotfooted it in advance down the corridor into the niche. We were none too soon. She came back straight, angular, certain. She might have been an animated mummy, moved by invisible wires, or by some ingenious electrical control. She recrossed the threshold, closing the door. The latch clicked. Silence seeped back. We heard rustling finally. Then came the creaking of the springs from the sleeping-chamber, a light body flinging itself down. Silence again—full stillness.

"Palgrave mopped his face and his brow. 'Great God, man! Did you see it? Can such things be? Why, Olive was there—and then—and then she became the mummy of some ancient, long-dead Egyptian. She faded mummy-brown and took on the flesh of a thousand years before my very eyes. Did you see it, man?'

"'I saw it, Palgrave,' I reassured him. 'I want you to go into her apartment at once. I forgot the balcony outside the sitting-room window. Someone might have lurked out there while a marvellously clever dummy went through that mummery for us!'

"So we tiptoed in. But the balcony outside the window is heavily overgrown with ivy. Fresh tendrils had woven a latticed floor there. Not a tendril was broken nor disturbed. There wasn't foot-space for any prowler. I looked above the window at the casement and the blinds. I thought of an ape. But there was not a sign to intimate the presence of anything human or otherwise. I faced a blank wall there.

"Palgrave slid into the sleeping chamber. I can see him now, stumbling along, his face a blob of white in the darkness. I can hear his stealing finger blindly feeling about, fumbling for the switch. His breath rasped, sharply indrawn. Then—a shrouded golden gleam of light, like the amber of those tigerish, yellow, glassy eyes that I had last seen in the brown parchment skin of what had been Olive Palgrave.

"I watched him, scarcely knowing what to expect. But he stood there, rooted. Then he made a futile gesture, wiping his brow and biting at his underlip. He beckoned to me. I tiptoed over and glanced in over his shoulder.

"And as I sit here, Allenby, Olive Palgrave, as fair-skinned as a lily, and as sound of flesh as any twenty-year-old, lay there facing us, breathing softly, quietly."

"Her wrist?" demanded Allenby. "Did you look on it?"

"I did. About it was an odd little porcelain band, carrying a patent catch for holding an unset, flat stone. The amulet was on her arm. But the scarab was gone!"

Allenby shook an admonitory finger at Gresham. There was an odd, incredulous glint in his eyes.

"Digby, Digby, I'd thought better of you. Why, if you should tell that even to the yellowest journal afloat, they'd quash the tale as something born out of hashish or loco-weed. And yet—I know you."

"Right," answered Gresham. "You take the only normal view of it. I gave up every theory except that of hypnotism. Palgrave is the type who could master that questionable art. But I'm not an easy 'subject.' And yet there seemed no other way to explain what I'd seen, or thought I'd seen. Palgrave stood close to me. He gripped my shoulder. Could he have so taken possession of my visual sense, as well as my mental, as to make me believe I saw that transformation from the quick to the long-dead? But why? There was no cause or reason for such knavery. I told him bluntly that the thing strained the wildest belief.

"His manner was genuine, unimpeachable. He appeared as distressed as I. I warned him flatly that I wouldn't budge until I was assured that no hypnotism had been practiced upon me. He didn't grow angry at the suggestion. He merely considered it as part of the inevitable. But I wanted something tangible to cling to, some final investigatory straw. The upshot of it was that I planned to play guard every night outside Olive Palgrave's door.

"I waited three nights, futilely. This was not strange. The extreme nervous excitement which dominates that brand of temperament during a siege of somnambulism had expended itself. Olive slept normally in the interim following her midnight scarab-ambulations. I'd expected it. But at dinner on the fourth night that same overstrung excitement and nervous laugh characterized her manner. Young Fenwick, the artist, had been down that afternoon with some companionable crony. Fenwick was rather a clever craftsman in jewelry setting and the like. I suspected him of designing the dull-glazed porcelain amulet with its adjustable catch. Anyhow, Olive was nervously wrought up. She ate little and talked a bit flamboyantly. Her laugh, too, was a couple of tones too high. I'd sighted the signs, and I was ready for her. Palgrave retired to his rooms and locked himself in directly after dinner. He was out of the running.

"SHORTLY after midnight her door opened. She stood there as before, stiff, rigid, erect. Her eyes were straight ahead. Then the transformation began, subtly, unbelievably—as if some brown shadow had fallen, second by second, across her face, deepening like a cloud of dun dust with the ebbing of time, even as the skin became shrunken and wizened.

"But I was ready for the change. I relied on a simple, scientific expedient for verifying what I believed I saw. I had my small vest-pocket camera with its highly efficient lens. I had my little collapsible tripod which folds up small enough to slip into my sack coat pocket. I had set this up with the camera in place, ready. Also, I had a sheet of flashlight powder, all primed, in the embrasure.

"The night lent itself perfectly to the trick I was trying to turn. It had been one of those storm-provocative afternoons when everything seemed to vibrate with heat-pockets. The air was thick enough to slice with a scalpel. Then the hovering, threatening tempest burst with unleashed fury. It was accompanied by an admirable mixture of light, wind, rain and thunder. It couldn't have been better. My light powder-puff would be sucked into silence under that rattling, roistering, natural outburst.

"So I was ready, most ably abetted by Mother Nature. When the entire transformation from the quick to the shriveled long-dead had been completed, I touched off the powder. She was deaf to it, as she was to the tempest outside. And the smoke had scarcely cleared in the corridor before she was jerking along in that precise, wooden, mechanical tread straight for the curio-room."

"The amulet? Did she wear it?"

"Yes. But it was empty. The scarab was still inside the case, where she had placed it on her former midnight sally. So I followed her, treading gingerly in the dark, with livid sheets of lightning, like intermittent powder flashes, limning out the hall. She entered the museum, strode straight for the case. From her belt she produced the key, that perfect duplicate that she had caused to be fashioned. She brought out the scarab. She stood for a time, her brown, wrinkled fingers touching it delicately, almost idolatrously. She might have gone back a couple of thousand years and taken on the faith of ancient Egypt as well as its mummified, physical attributes. Evidently satisfied with the scarabaeas, she set it back reluctantly, shut and locked the case. I was ready in my embrasure. She reentered her apartment, shut and latched the door. Came the slight creaking of her bed. Followed her

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soft breathing, as regular as a child's."

"If I'd been there," commented Allenby, "I'd have given her a good shake of the shoulder, brought her to her daylight senses, and demanded an explanation."

"You would not," disagreed Gresham, a bit brusquely. "For two reasons. The first I've already told you. And the second is equally potent. If she'd ever seen herself in the glass, or looked at those wrinkled, leathery arms of hers—well, I wouldn't be accountable for results! To one of her temperament it might be fatal, or it might deprive her of her reason. I went back down the hall to Palgrave's dimly lighted sitting-room. I could hear his restless, agitated tread, back and forth, back and forth, awaiting the result of my sole spying."

"JUST a word," put in Allenby. "Palgrave's rooms are down the hall, in the same corridor. Is there any connection inside the house, or by balconies outside, between his chambers and his niece's?"

"None whatever. During my daylight vigil I let no grass grow, I can tell you. I looked for that, for secret panels, for hidden passages, for some way of creeping along the house. Paris Palgrave never left his rooms. I'd stretched a line of cobweb silk across the door of his bedchamber and that of his sitting-room. Both cut the corridor. When I stealthily examined the lines I'd laid, they were untampered with. At first I'd been hazily suspicious of Palgrave. But I could find no motive. He had no need to call me in, except, like me, the scientific puzzle of the thing intrigued him. It went beyond him. With all possible speed I developed that flash-light. It would be a waterproof witness to bolster up what my seeing eyes refused to accredit."

"Well? Well?" demanded Allenby, sitting bolt upright, his boyish face unusually severe.

For answer Gresham went to a filing cabinet. He poked about, brought out a tin case. In it was a flat book carrying oiled paper envelopes for filing, against inclement weather, extra fine negatives and prints.

He sorted out one of the transparent paper envelopes. Slowly he passed it over to Allenby.

Allenby clamped his lips into a grim, straight line. Everything about him said plainly enough that he fought shy of the whole story. He would have laughed anyone else out of countenance. And one sensed that he swore mightily by documentary evidence.

Slowly the headquarters man fumbled in the thin envelope. He pulled out the print, turned it up to the light on the desk. For a few seconds he sat staring down at it. The expression on his face changed, from stern disbelief to a sort of a flaccid stupefaction. Then he emitted a shrill, protesting whistle.

"Well, commend me to the society of the whiskered phantoms! Go bury me in the dust-deep Valley of the Kings! Wouldn't that make the solidified sphinx itself chortle a chanson of chesty triumph!"

On the desk lay, clean-cut and inescapable, the black-and-white print of a shrunken, brown figure, wrapped in ghostly white. The face that stared forth looked as if it had beheld the dark confines of a wooden jacket for long and silent centuries.

"Unholy catfish!" rapped Allenby. "Wouldn't that rattle your wisdom teeth! I'm mighty glad we're going to be on the scene. Little Olive Palgrave had better watch her step."

Gresham shook his head dubiously. "It's contrary to reason. Therefore it is potently reasonable. But something criminal is afoot there, I swear. And somehow I feel it's focusing to a head with the coming of the long-dead princess Amon-Ya. Coming events sometimes cast curious shadows before. This may be a case in point. We shall see."

He put back the sinister photographic print.

"If I'd been in your shoe-leather," declared Allenby, "I'd have pruned good and prodigally into the retiring reputation of the surprising Olive branch, I'll tell the world."

"I did. Naturally. Couldn't find a thing amiss with her record, past or present. Mighty attractive girl. Just completed her education last year. Came home to her uncle, accompanied by her mother, after months abroad for a finishing glaze. Athletic. Alive. Singularly free from any unsavory gossip, too."

"What's the mother like? Fascinating widow, and all that?"

Gresham shrugged. "You shall judge for yourself. There's one thing certain. I've never seen a mother more devoted than Dalla Palgrave is to Olive. Wrapped up in her. And the girl, too, is singularly charming in her regard for the older woman. Regular turtle-doves. It's rare nowadays. Genuine, too. Olive treats her mother as if she were Dresden china."

"Mighty glad Friday night's not so far away," anticipated Allenby. "Something's doing—all right, all right. Here's luck!"

* * * * * *

They set out in Digby Gresham's big motor. Gresham planned to keep his car in the garage on the mainland. Spruce Island was Palgrave's personal property—a rock-bound, pine-clad little kingdom, two miles from the coast. His own power-boat offered a speedy method for annihilating the distance between the island and the shore.

THEY ran along through tiny, tucked-in villages clinging to the rock-bound coast like barnacles, intershot with neatly tufted evergreens—a thousand-thousand Christmas trees rearing emerald pompoms on the landscape. It was a delightful journey. Even Allenby was wrapped in appreciative reverie, his eyes on the lariat-coiling road ahead.

They were perhaps five miles from the little pier on the mainland, when dead ahead, out of the dusk of the eventide, the sudden staccato, clarion blasts of a whistle severed the stillness. Inshore, over the hummocks of many-shaped rocks and the lush green patches of evergreen, sturdy stone walls surrounding many buildings shone out, lichen-gray. Snouty turrets broke the wall at fixed intervals. Men in uniform, with rifles under their arms, patrolled back and forth. Others combed the pines and rocks below. The scene suggested some colorful cinema, accompanied by weird blasts from a jazzy saxophone.

The siren was broadcasting, with all the strength of its metal lungs, the news that a man has escaped—a living link from the chain of human beings bound together in durance by the law. The siren started again, bellowing discordant yelps, signally out of tune on that peaceful purple landscape.

A man dipped into the road ahead, a fellow in uniform with a rifle slung to his shoulder.

"Halt!" he commanded.

Gresham halted, scanning the weather-beaten face before him, which topped the uniform of a penitentiary guard.

The rifle came down to rest. The guard squinted at each in turn. Then his gaze volleyed to the locked rear deck of the roadster.

"Open that up!" he ordered. "We're taking no chances here. Longhouse, lifer, has cut from cover. Dodging about loose here somewhere. Just open up the rear deck there."

"Right-o," accepted Gresham, snapping off the ignition.

He unlocked the back, flung up the hinged cover. Only his spares, the tool-chest, and a couple of suit-cases showed up.

THE guard signalled. "All right. We're suspicious of everything around here. Have to be."

They were off again.

Gresham glanced at the clock in the dash.

"We're still two miles from the landing. It's already seven-thirty. Well, such is luck!"

The trail now looped in close to the water. The cliffs sheered down raggedly, unmarked by verdure. Weird shadows cast by the clotting twilight blackened the stones with dancing, phantom figures, like those of some Francoise vase—vivid silhouettes on the polished glaze of the smooth rocks.

A half dozen guards sprang up, gnome-like, here and there on the rocks. The purple of twilight glazed the sea to polished placidity under the soothing fingers of sluggish, phlegmatic low tide. A patch of contorted seaweed, matted and clumped like some aboriginal seine, bobbed within the accidental catamaran made by a couple of logs lashed together with driftstuff.

Instantly the guards began a systematic peppering of weeds, logs and all suspicious flotsam.

"Huh!" grunted Allenby. "They're passing up nothing. I pity the devil if he's swimming under water there, throwing the mistaken notion that he could use any kind of driftstuff for a headpiece. Huh! Hot bath, adulterated with buckshot and bullets. If Sam Longhouse is doing any diving stunts, he's slated to come up a human sponge. And pronto."

Gresham nodded.

Twice again, before they reached the pier, they were halted and searched. The screech of the siren had died down to a muttered, muted murmur. Out to sea, fishing boats, powercraft, a couple of schooners, and some scows showed unusual activity. The breaking of prison bars might signify a generous reward, depending upon the importance of the dodger.

They found Palgrave's launch tied up to a pole jutting up from the pier. A man paced back and forth. He was bareheaded, his dark head thickly intershot with gray. His hands were clasped behind him. His head was slung loosely forward, as if he were buried in deep thought.

"That's Palgrave," nodded Gresham.

"He's decidedly wrought up over some-

thing. See him locking and unlocking his long fingers, how he pulls at his chin. Something's gone wrong! Before this night's over, Allenby, we're going to see trouble."

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Two Fierce Spirits Warred Within His Soul

(*Continued from page* 35)

The police then began shadowing Keller, while they went about the work of tracing the trunk. With scientific precision, the police delved into the remaining details of the case. It was established that the trunk in which McNicol's body was discovered had been manufactured by the firm of Keller and McNicol. Also, it was disclosed that a watch belonging to McNicol had been pawned by Keller shortly after his disappearance.

The net had been drawn and Keller was in it! He was arrested, charged with the murder, and placed on trial.

It was a long-drawn-out process—that trial of Keller's for the murder of Dan McNicol. The public was entertained by the sensational melodrama and city editors were gloating over such a choice morsel of copy. Keller, with all the astuteness of which he was capable, protested his innocence. But the prosecution wove such an incriminating story of circumstancial evidence about him that he was unable to convince the jury of it. He was convicted and sentenced to twelve years in the Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia. That was early in 1916.

No sooner had the gray walls of the prison swallowed him than his scheming mind—the demoniacal chamber of the left side of his brain—was plotting for his liberation. He would get out as soon as possible! But mere escape was not his plan; it was something more subtle, more cunning, worthy of a master criminal. He would create a reputation for being a model prisoner. He would curb the evil Mr. Hyde within him and would project the upright Dr. Jekyll.

And so it was that the dissolution of the criminal Keller took place behind prison bars, and the meek and humble Eddie Keller began to work out his plan of release. It wasn't long before Keller was regarded by his keepers as a superior type of convict. He gained the confidence of the warden and soon emerged a trustee. He put himself in the good graces of the prison authorities by frequently turning over information to them which resulted in the frustration of daring plans for whole-

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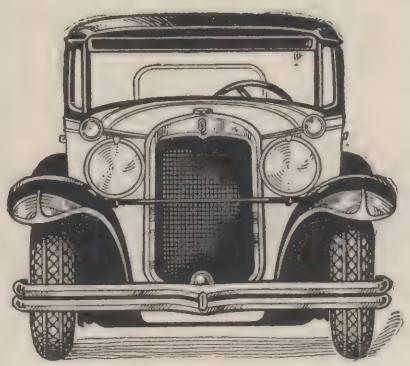

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sale jail-breaks. He was a perfect prisoner.

Time went on and Keller devoted his spare moments to working at a trade he knew. He manufactured physicians' kit bags and leather novelties. He was known to have made expensive brief-cases and sent them with his compliments to celebrities, such as the late President Harding and Governors Sproul and Pinchot of Pennsylvania. He was playing his cards well.

IN the meantime, there was being woven into the amazing texture of Keller's life still another fabric. An attractive welfare worker who frequently visited the prison—Miss Jennie V. Flanagan—became interested in the suave and placid model prisoner. Into her sympathetic ears Keller poured out the story of his past, including the incident of his previous prison term in Sing Sing. He painted for her a picture of a man who had been the victim of a cruel fate. He disclaimed all guilt in connection with McNicol's death and confided to her that although he had been a pawn in the hands of vindictive society, he was not a murderer. So straightforward, convincing and appealing was Keller's plea that Miss Flanagan pledged herself to work for his release.

It was at this juncture that Keller came to the attention of Dr. Goddard. Dr. Goddard was a sincere and ardent advocate of the idea that, once given a good break, a convict could be made to go straight. The kindly doctor had good grounds for his belief, for he had helped release many prisoners from the Eastern Penitentiary and nearly all of them, under his guidance, had carved niches for themselves in the realms of honest enterprise.

Keller impressed Dr. Goddard much as he had impressed Miss Flanagan.

"And so, if you can see your way clear to obtain a parole for me, my dear doctor," Keller told him one day, "I shall see to it that you shall be proud of me. I will prove to you that I am an upright man and that unkind circumstances have been responsible for my presence behind this prison wall."

During the next few years, Keller was kept under the strict supervision of Dr. Goddard and Miss Flanagan, and, in 1924, both were firmly convinced that the time was ripe for a parole. Keller had evidently repented; he had become religious and otherwise proved to those in authority that he was ready to take his place in the world as a useful citizen.

In the meanwhile, events tended to create a new existence for the many-sided Keller. His wife, heartbroken and neglected during her husband's incarceration, had died. On the other hand, a romance between Keller and Miss Flanagan, his "prison angel," had blossomed. The welfare worker's trips to the prison had become more and more frequent. She would always go directly to Keller's cell when she arrived at the penitentiary. One day the convict, calling to his aid his most debonair gallantry, told Miss Flanagan that he loved her. He asked her to marry him on the very day of his release from prison. Miss Flanagan consented.

Although his sentence still had four years to run, Keller was recommended by Dr. Goddard for a parole. The release was ordered and on the morning when the prisoner donned civilian clothes and was preparing to walk out into freedom, Dr. Goddard, as an additional proof of his friendship and interest, offered Keller financial assistance if he needed it. Keller declined the offer and revealed that he had accumulated almost ten thousand dollars from the sale of his leather novelties during the eight years of his prison life. That proved to be true.

Miss Flanagan was also at the prison that day—for this was her wedding day, strange enough. When Keller walked out of the huge gate to greet his fiancée, she could hardly recognize him. He had sent for a haberdasher and a tailor and achieved an uncanny transformation of himself. Attired in a smart, expensively cut blue serge suit, black shoes and spats, a long, dark topcoat of fine material and a gray fedora hat, he drove Miss Flanagan to the city hall for the marriage ceremony. Again there was irony. Keller was married in the same courtroom where, eight years before, he was sentenced for the murder of Dan McNicol!

A few weeks after he had settled his bride in a cozy, well-furnished apartment, Keller cast about for a means of livelihood. Whether it was an accident that led Keller's footsteps into a bank to seek employment is something that has never been determined. It is sufficient to know that he applied for the job of night watchman at the Corn Exchange Bank of Philadelphia, one of the largest banking houses in that city. On presenting bona fide credentials and letters of reference, and withstanding the unusually rigid investigation of the bank's officials into his character, Keller got the job. The letters—no one ever revealed the names of the signers—spoke glowingly of his spotless reputation, ability and integrity. An astounding fact is that Keller never even troubled to change his name.

THIS bank, when Keller had worked there about a month, was to be the scene of one of his final excesses born of his dual mind. His lust for crime was stimulated by the presence of gold heaped high all about him.

A shortage of twenty-five thousand dollars was discovered at the bank one morning! But the theft had been executed with such skill and swiftness that the criminal was never discovered. At the time of the theft the bank officials knew nothing of Keller's past. That is why he was never even questioned. Subsequent events, however, led the police to link Keller with that robbery.

As time passed, Keller continued to cement his friendship with Dr. Goddard, visiting the physician's home frequently. He met Mrs. Goddard, the doctor's wife, and she, like her husband, developed a liking for Keller and was always anxious to know how he was progressing. The man, in fact, made such a favorable impression that he and his wife were often invited to dine with the Goddards. Thus Keller met many friends of Goddard's too. During his visits, Keller was permitted the run of the Goddard mansion, and he soon learned just where his benefactor's wife kept her costly jewels. He found out, too, the hiding place of the large sums of cash which the wealthy physician was in the habit of keeping on hand.

One day, Keller called on the doctor and asked him to lend him some money saying that he wished to start in business.

"But you had several thousand dollars when you left prison only a few months ago," replied Dr. Goddard. "Surely, Edward, that is sufficient to begin business with."

"That's all gone," scowled Keller.

"I don't believe it, Edward," replied the doctor.

"You don't have to believe me, then," retorted Keller, sarcastically, as he left the physician's office abruptly.

A few weeks afterward, several of Dr. Goddard's friends complained to him that Keller had sought them out for the purpose of borrowing money. Angered, the physician sent for Keller.

"LISTEN, Edward," Dr. Goddard said. "I've done everything in my power to help you and will continue to do so whenever necessary. But I don't want you to bother my friends for money. That's why I sent for you. Keep away from my friends. If you have any favors to ask, ask them of me. Remember, now, whenever you really need assistance, I'll only be too glad to offer it to you. I—"

Dr. Goddard didn't finish his sentence, for Keller sharply turned on his heel, walked out of the room and slammed the door behind him.

His base criminal instincts aroused because Dr. Goddard had not believed his lies and fallen a prey to his wiles, Keller calmly decided he would kill Dr. Goddard!

"Keller the Killer" was passing through a strange ecstasy of the mind. He had cast off his saner self and was flaunting its maniacal counterpart!

As the weeks wore on, the plan began to take definite shape in Keller's warped mind. One night, after dinner, he said to his wife:

"Do you know, Jennie, I think I'll 'bump off' Doc Goddard and get a little of that cash and jewelry that's lying around up there."

Mrs. Keller laughed. She thought her husband was joking. She knew nothing of the run-in he had had with the physician.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Keller. "I am serious."

But Mrs. Keller still refused to take the matter seriously.

The man left the apartment and hailed a taxi. It was about nine o'clock. He was not due to report at the bank for duty until midnight. He wanted to kill the physician and then go to work!

Keller left the cab a block from Dr. Goddard's residence. He stole up to the house, which was located in a quiet, residential district and, after trying several keys, he succeeded in gaining access through the front door, unnoticed. He silently went up the stairs to the second floor but, upon hearing laughter in the house, he reasoned that a party was in progress and that the time for slaying the doctor was not propitious.

Arriving home about eleven o'clock, he found his wife reading.

"I've just been up at Doc Goddard's but couldn't 'bump him off' because he's throwing a party," he said.

Keller then launched into the details of his trip to the physician's home that startled his wife. Mrs. Keller studied her husband. She concluded he was going mad, and, because she feared he would kill her,

she concealed her horror and pretended to go on with her reading. The strange aspect of her husband was being slowly revealed to her. It was a side of him she did not even suspect. The terrible thoughts that passed through her mind kept her sleepless that night.

A week later, on his night off, Keller awoke in the middle of the night, dripping with cold sweat. He aroused his wife and asked her to make him a cup of tea to quiet his nerves. After she had done so, Mrs. Keller asked:

"What's the matter, Edward? Are you ill?"

"Yes, and no. I just dreamed that I murdered Doc Goddard. I'm upset, that's all."

When he went back to bed again, he told his wife not to turn out the lights, adding:

"I'm afraid of the dark, Jennie."

ONE day, when her husband was absent, Mrs. Keller, greatly alarmed over his strange actions, searched though his belongings and came upon two bundles of newspaper and magazine clippings. One of the bundles contained numerous accounts of McNicol's disappearance and Keller's conviction. The other clippings, which had been taken from various scientific magazines and newspapers, dealt with the effect of lime on the human body. When the woman read the latter clippings, she became panic-stricken. She feared that her husband planned to kill her and burn her body in lime.

Mrs. Keller spent a long time in deep thought. She recalled that she had been unable to dissuade her husband from "kidding" about murdering Dr. Goddard. She was living with a mad man!

She hastily packed her belongings and left the apartment. Another chapter in Keller's black narrative had closed.

When Keller returned and found his wife gone, he asked neighbors whether they had seen her. As the hours wore on and she did not return, Keller arrived at the conclusion that his wife had deserted him. He didn't know, however, that she had gone to Dr. Goddard's house and warned the physician of the murder plot. Dr. Goddard, however, was inclined to take the matter more or less lightly.

Soon afterwards, Keller closed the apartment and took a furnished room in a boarding-house in another section of the city. But he did not notify the bank of his change of address.

One Saturday midnight, eight months after his release from prison, Keller reported to the bank for duty as usual. He was to work until six o'clock the following morning. More than six thousand dollars in cash and thirteen thousand dollars in endorsed checks had been received through the night depository after the bank had closed Saturday noon.

There were five watchmen besides Keller in the bank that night, each man being assigned to patrol a certain section of the big institution. Keller's beat took him past the large box into which the cash and checks had been dropped.

Every half hour, each watchman was required to press a button which automatically sent a message into the detective agency which protected the bank. Keller, upon reporting for duty, sent in his usual twelve o'clock signal. At twelve-thirty, after he had completed his first round, he pressed the button again. He also gave his usual signals at one o'clock, one-thirty and two o'clock. But when two-thirty came, the night operator in the detective agency noticed that only five of the six watchmen at the Corn Exchange Bank had turned in their half-hourly reports.

"Keller hasn't signalled yet," said the man in the agency at two-thirty-three. The clock crept around to two-thirty-five and still there was no signal from Keller.

"Better run right over to the bank and see if anything's wrong," said the night chief of the agency to one of the sleuths.

BUT Kellar had stolen a march on the authorities. Shortly after two o'clock, when the other five watchmen were some distance from him, he scooped up the cash and checks, wrapped the loot in a newspaper and quietly and quickly went from the bank. He hailed a taxi and headed for his boarding-house, arriving there shortly before it was time for his next report at the bank.

He went up to his room, stuffed the money into a battered suitcase and started down the stairs. But the proprietor of the boarding-house, awakened by Keller's footsteps, called out:

"Who's there!"

"It is I—Keller," was the answer.

"Oh, I thought it was a robber, Mr. Keller," said the landlord, peering out of his bedroom door and seeing his boarder on the stairway.

"Where you goin' with the suitcase?"

"Oh, I'm taking a little trip."

"Be gone long?"

"No, not long." A pause. Then: "Say, have you ever heard me speak of Dr. Goddard?"

"Why, yes, I believe I have."

"Well, watch the papers in the morning. There's going to be a big story about him."

With that, Keller bounded down the steps. The landlord was rather bewildered by Keller's parting statement but he didn't attach any particular significance to it. He had always thought Keller a "queer bird," anyway.

When the detective arrived at the bank, he discovered that the sixth watchman was missing. A quick survey revealed that the night depository was empty.

The officer looked up Keller's address in the bank employees' records and hastened to Keller's old apartment. Finding the place deserted, the sleuth sent in a general alarm. Keller's forethought in changing his address worked in his favor in the murky hours that Sunday morning.

While police were combing the city for him, and while Dr. Goddard slept in blissful ignorance of any plan against his life, Keller drove up in a taxi to the Lorraine Hotel and registered under an assumed name. That was at about three o'clock. He clutched the bag which contained the fortune.

AT six-thirty, Keller came down to the lobby, bag in hand, and checked out. He had apparently spent all his time in the hotel perfecting his plans.

Going out from the hostelry, Keller hailed a taxi driven by Frank J. Genscha, instructing the driver to rush him to a spot near Dr. Goddard's home.

Keller climbed into the back seat of the cab. The ride would take fifteen minutes or more.

"Hurry up!" snapped Keller to the driver after they had been riding for less than a minute. "Hurry as fast as you can! I haven't a second to lose!"

Genscha heard his passenger beating a nervous tattoo on the bag with his fingers as the cab weaved in and out of the early Sunday morning traffic.

The town was lying beneath the spectral pall of an early morning mist. Keller continued to drum on the suitcase, but as the cab swung around a corner and entered the quiet street on which the Goddard home was located, he ceased.

"I'm glad this trip is over," Genscha murmured to himself. The cab rolled up to the curb and came to a halt in front of the Goddard house.

Genscha jumped to the pavement and opened the cab door so that his passenger could alight without delay. He was in such a hurry!

"Well, here we are," said the driver without looking into the dark gloom of the cab.

There was no answer.

Genscha quickly glanced into the back seat. He staggered back.

There was Keller, slumped over the open bag, dead of heart failure—checks and green gold bills scattered over his body, as if he had carried out some ultimate ritual with the spoils of his lust.

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A Destiny Stronger Than Love Claimed My Bride

(*Continued from page 21*)

maid ushered me into her boudoir, she was lounging on her bed. It wasn't really a bed, but more like a divan, canopied by gorgeous silk draperies which had once belonged to a court favorite. No doubt the priceless lace coverlet on the bed came from the same source. Her negligee, however, was decidedly up to the minute in style.

"You may kiss my hand," she announced impishly, "but you must not take my pulse."

"Since when does a patient give a doctor orders?" I retorted.

Then she told me quite seriously that I was to serve her only as a friend. For the present, I was dismissed from my position as physician. I knew Eve so well, knew every mood of hers so thoroughly that I had no difficulty defining her secret.

SHE was quite aware of the fact that my love for her had not met the same fate as that of her other professed admirers.

We had become so friendly, she shrank from having me minister to her at so personal a function as childbirth. Perhaps she suspected that her pain would affect me, and she wanted me to be spared. I doubt whether any of her admirers would have believed Eve capable of such delicacy of sentiment. Certainly the very public which spoke of her daily would have ridiculed the idea.

For a time after the child was born, Eve and Samuel spent many domestic days, many idyllic days in their sequestered chateau. Between engagements they always returned to their elaborate home, and lived as peacefully, as happily together as any two ordinary people in any small cottage in France.

Eve was destined not to know happiness from her child. I do not want to go into detail; for, as godfather, I believe my secret to be sacred. I can only say that tragedy stalked that child, and, since this episode of her life is only remotely connected with Eve's renunciation, I do not feel it necessary to write of it.

The child was about three when Samuel died. Shocked, resentful, bereft, Eve set about trying to forget. Then, and then only did all the stories related about her come true.

She did not turn to the saintly life as so many women do. She was still too much of the flesh. She was still too young, and desire was strong in her.

I hate to talk of it, for with all her defects, Eve occupied then, and does now, my whole heart. Nevertheless, her life during this period *was* everything people said it was.

The Chateau of Tavence became a scene of many orgies. The sound and wildness of them, the outrage of them, seemed to spread all over France. She invited crowds of pleasure seekers down to the castle where they drank themselves into oblivion. Eve herself learned to drink disgracefully, until time after time I carried her to her room unconscious.

There were lovers, and "affairs"—what is the use? Everybody will know what I mean when I say Eve lived a life of shame, of sin. Yet, because I believed Samuel's death had brought this reaction on her, I once more offered marriage to Eve Lavalliere. Her beauty had not been spoiled, strangely enough, and I loved her despite her life.

She seemed most surprised at my proposal and only shook her head.

"I am sorry, Pierre, my best friend. I want to know there is one man in the world who is just—a friend. All the others desire me. But you—you will always be a wonderful friend."

Why was I fated never to have the love of Eve Lavalliere—I who offered her true affection and devotion in return, where others did not?

Eve the daring, the vivacious, the abandoned—the woman who kindled desire in most of her male guests, and had permitter herself to be freely kissed and embraced—this woman began to sit in a darkened room, her face pathetic and drooping. Usually on those occasions she wore something simple, almost austere, and her eyes stared into the distance, seeing heaven knows what.

THIS change was truly amazing, and at that time revealed only to me.

"My friend Pierre," she said to me once. "You know I have not been religious. But now I feel sometimes—like this—after my sins have been great—that there is something more than this world. There must be another, far greater, much more beautiful than we poor, shameful humans can conceive. I wish I was worthy—"

Always then, I would urge her to marry me. Always a sad smile and a negative shake of her head was the answer.

At this time her success on the stage had reached its peak. There was such dash, such complete abandon, such perfect art in her performances that audiences literally went wild at her very appearances. So much for the cause of her fame. So far as her notoriety went—the newspapers helped to stimulate the public's curiosity by reporting her parties and mentioning her new favorites.

Eventually I could not bear to be in her place when other people were around. She sensed the reason for my absence without ever asking about it. In fact, I think she suspected that I didn't care to see her at all. For once, when I dropped in on her at her town apartment on a Sunday evening, she was ill and in bed. And she had not sent for me!

She complained of a pain in her side, but absolutely refused me permission to examine her. I left her with misgivings in my heart thinking how unmerciful fate can be at times.

Many years had passed since Samuel's death. Time had swung about in its course to that year when all Europe was plunged into conflict, the year of 1914. Immediately after the declaration of the war I enlisted, and was appointed an examining physician on a Paris medical board.

The work was terrific. Thousands and thousands of men to be examined and hospitals to be organized. France was first in my thoughts, Eve next. And France claimed most of my time, so that for months following my enlistment, I saw Eve very little.

Throughout that first terrific upheaval, people nevertheless maintained sufficient interest to be amazed at Eve's sudden disappearance from the French stage. Though primarily occupied with the war, the newspapers yet found space in their columns to give that feature publicity.

WHY was she living in seclusion? Had she been burned about the face as rumor said? Had she sworn never to display her disfigured features to the world again? Or had her life of excess and sin despoiled her loveliness to such an extent that she shrank from public appearances?

I was myself worn out and on the verge of a breakdown, and so was able to get a week's leave. If necessary, that week was to be spent in locating her.

Imagine my consternation, then, when I found two servants only at the chateau, the caretaker and his wife, both loudly protesting that Mlle. Lavalliere had not been living there for months. I did not trust them, but to all my pointed and impatient questioning they only answered that they knew nothing. I began to believe them when they said I might go through the castle and see for myself.

Hurrying from room to room, calling to Eve as I went, I was spurred on by a new fear. Obviously the rooms had not been used for a period. Her own boudoir wore that air of desertion which an intimate room assumes more quickly than any other after its occupant is gone.

And although I was convinced that Eve was not in the chateau, I still felt that those two servants knew where she was. I expressed my regrets about not finding Madamoiselle, and taking my bag with me, pretended I was leaving.

I had the feeling that if Eve had secluded herself, she must be somewhere on the estate, somewhere close by the home where she and Samuel had been happy, somewhere in the district rich in legend and miracle.

The estate included on its vast preserves a number of wooden and brick cottages usually rented to farmers and peasants of the neighborhood. I decided to call at each one of them and ask for information of Eve.

Down at the foot of the hill, far, far below the turreted castle which had been the scene of her shame, in the humblest of the cottages obscured from view by tall, old trees, I found Eve.

I knocked at the door. A voice called out, "I do not wish any dinner today, Teresa."

It was Eve's voice! Trying the door, I discovered it was open, and very quietly I entered.

My first reaction was that I had in-

truded upon a strange person who somehow had usurped Eve's voice. But that feeling vanished when I beheld those large, brown eyes staring at me in wonderment.

She lay on a white iron cot, that was like a hospital bed. The only other pieces of furniture in the room were a simple white table and a white chair. My heart contracted as I bent to kiss her hand, so queerly transparent against the white sheet which covered her.

"Pierre, my friend," she murmured. "So you have found me."

Unable to utter a word, I drew a chair over to the cot. Strong as I could be in the presence of wounded soldiers, yet a lump rose in my throat while I regarded her figure stretched almost lifelessly beneath the sheet.

SHE had grown thinner, and her face was drawn but never had she reminded me so much of our first meeting. Her face in addition to the natural perfection of feature, glowed with a new spiritual glory strangely reminiscent of the Madonna. A crucifix hung on the wall opposite the bed, and as she spoke to me her eyes wandered constantly to the pitying Christ.

"You are ill, Eve," I pleaded. "Why don't you tell me what it is? Let me help you."

"It is not your help I need," she said sadly. "Earthly help can do me no good."

I could do nothing with her. She displayed that quiet obstinacy which admitted no argument. She told me that worldly doctors had diagnosed her case as appendicitis. Here I could not help smiling, despite her plight, and when she asked me why, I told her of the various rumors concerning her retirement.

"And so it is only appendicitis," I said. "We shall have you well in no time."

Again, sadly, she refused my aid. It was more than that. She had suffered a complete spiritual upheaval in the first days of her illness, and now she knew that only divine help could heal her. She had been a sinner of the worst kind, she admitted. Yet she did not want to die in sin. And since she knew she was going to die, she had been preparing herself for months to take the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lourdes.

"I cannot face Our Lady yet," she murmured, gazing at the crucifix, "but when the time comes, I shall be ready."

I returned to Paris with a heavy heart, at a loss as to what course to pursue.

Three months later, in the spring, at dawn, I was awakened by the persistent ringing of the telephone. Eve's housekeeper was at the other end of the wire begging me frantically to come. Her mistress had collapsed during the night. She was conscious but ebbing fast.

I had to secure permission from my superior officer who knew my attachment to Eve. He granted me a leave and I set out instantly to aid her. I do not recollect how I ever got there, but at sight of Eve I realized the gravity of her case. She appeared to be suffering from an acute case of appendicitis, and was in a very serious condition which an operation might help. Strange to say, though, she recognized me. She told me in a voice hardly above a whisper that she had not sent for me.

The servant had turned to me on her own responsibility. Weak as she was, hardly able to move her hands, Eve's will

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was as indomitable as it had ever been.

"One does not send for worldly friends at such a time," she said. "I will not submit myself to medical care, Pierre. Lourdes! Dear Mother of God! Grant me life so that I may not die without looking at your face. Pierre, there is a novena now. You must take me on to Lourdes."

Not excitement, but a sort of holy calm shone in her eyes. It seemed to me that this was the request of a dying woman, of my lovely Eve, and that to refuse would be cruelty.

I CALLED my superior officer on the telephone, told him the story, and he lengthened my furlough. Eve had to be carried on a stretcher, and the caretaker and I fashioned a contraption out of poles and strong linen.

I was determined to accompany her on the pilgrimage whether she wanted me to or not. But from the instant we lifted her into a motor, which was to take us to Lourdes, she seemed not to know who was with her, or to care. Several times I spoke to her on the trip, and although she was not unconscious, she did not answer. Her gaze was transfixed on some invisible glory, and she would only smile.

Truly I did not think she would live to reach the shrine. But she did, and what I am about to relate cannot be disputed. I am what you Americans would call a "hard-boiled" scientist. I do not believe everything told me, but this I witnessed myself.

My own hands carried Eve Lavalliere through the horde of sufferers down to the innermost grotto where the people at the point of death are permitted to pray. My own ears heard Eve's passionate prayers, while the bitter tears of shame scalded her eyes; heard her promise Our Lady to devote the rest of her life to God were she spared from death now.

My own eyes, at the most solemn moment of the mass, saw her rise erect. As the priest's voice lifted to final exhortation, begging for pity upon his sufferers, I, a physician, saw her rise from the stretcher unmindful of an ailment for which surgery had held out little if any hope.

I had seen no vision. I had not seen Our Lady stoop to lay her gracious hand on Eve. To me was denied the glory of glimpsing the Virgin. I saw only the result of a seeming miracle.

One of the celebrants, Mgr. Lemaitre, called upon Eve at her hotel the next day. I had kept close to her, for she was in a high state of excitement, because she would not tell of her experience except to some holy father. And I was happy that Eve wanted me to be in the room, for I felt that I was never to see Eve Lavalliere again.

She was in a high state of excitement, but Mgr. Lemaitre talked softly to her and calmed her. He was a man who for many years had spread the gospel of health as well as of the Lord among the Arabs of Africa, and he knew how to comfort people.

EVE said her thoughts had turned to religion even before her illness. She had believed the illness was sent to test her sincerity and faith. She had come to the sacred grotto at Lourdes as a penitent, desiring life only that she might atone for her sins to the Holy Virgin.

She said that when she promised the Mother of God to devote her life to her, a vision appeared. Our Lady hovered over the grotto and spoke to Eve saying sadly that so many promised but few remembered. Eve cried out that she would not be one to forget, and the vision vanished.

Eve wanted to enter the Carmelite order instantly, but Mgr. Lemaitre shook his head. It is the strictest order, and the nuns have no contact whatever with mankind from the day they enter as novices. They never speak again. They renounce their homes, families—everything.

"And now you must go, Pierre," Eve told me when the priest had left. "I have no more friends out in the world. You must forget me, as I shall forget you. I must expiate my sins. Once more I shall make myself pleasing in His eyes, as I was in childhood. I am happy at last, Pierre."

And that was our farewell. The stern duties of war called me elsewhere, and later developments came to me through the letters of friends.

First Eve sold her splendid chateau, her collection of historic lavallieres, all her property and possessions, and gave the funds to the village priest at Thuillieres for his parish work.

THEN, as a lay sister, she entered the service of Mgr. Lemaitre, her spiritual adviser. With him she went to Africa to help nurse the Arab women and carry the sacred word to them. Eve had been snatched from death, but had not been restored to complete health. She was weakened, and Mgr. Lemaitre had believed this would prevent her from being accepted in the Carmelite order.

For two years, Eve endured the deadly climate of Morocco, performing the most arduous tasks in the heat of the desert. Then after that period, Eve Lavalliere returned to beg for admittance to the Carmelites. But she was once more a very sick woman, and she was rejected.

Thus Eve turned inevitably to the scenes of her childhood, to Toulon, her birthplace where there was a Dominican convent which received her as a novice.

And here the trail ends. Even as I write these lines, Eve may be dead of that last illness. I do not know whether she was spared. She may be dying; or perhaps she was once more restored to further Our Lady's work.

I shall never know. I only hope that she found the forgiveness she desired.

His Night of Vengeance

(*Continued from page* 41)

into the unlighted window. When he was back again behind the screen he had in his hand the card with the word "Room" printed on it.

"H'm!" he said.

He dropped the card in a drawer and closed it slowly.

To convey to you an adequate impression of the atmosphere in which we lived for the next few days is beyond my power. Words are poor pictures. We were obsessed. Literally we were overpowered by an unformed thought; obsessed by the presence of the man in the room above. Even the phrase is dramatic: The Man in the Room Above. It began to prey on old man Chambers' mind.

"I don't think I like him," he would say. "Do you think he's all right? I wish he'd never come here."

"But the man does no harm," I would point out. "He's peaceful enough—keeps to himself. Does he pay all right?"

"I suppose I've nothing actually to grumble about. He's an excellent lodger, I suppose. I don't know. I think I let him worry me too much. Yes, he pays up all right. But it's such a strange thing for a man to stay indoors day after day and never go out at all, never trouble about what's happening in the world. It isn't natural. He'll be forgetting what day it is if he stays up there much longer!"

"I have always said," said I, "that this queer old neighborhood is the very place in all the world where a man *can* forget what day it is. How can he keep a hold on life here? Nothing happens. Every day is like Sunday. Natural weekday things don't come off, somehow. I could easily forget the day myself, without being shut up in a room all the time. It would be great, wouldn't it, if he *did* forget? Such things are possible, eh?"

"I wish he'd go away," Chambers repeated monotonously. "I don't feel easy with him in the place."

But Darley stayed, keeping entirely to himself. The days went by, seven or eight Sundays all together, and I never had a glimpse of him. The nightly fireside gossip was all changed now. Mr. Chambers' mind forsook Central Park. He talked of nothing but the man in the room above, and this was in the nature of a great feat when you take into account how little there was to talk about. A week of Sundays, all overshadowed by this Darley. Then one evening Chambers had to go out to some club or society which he attended quarterly.

"I don't like leaving you," he grumbled; but time was short for his meeting and he had to go.

I prodded the little fire and drew the screen round and settled down to as cosy an evening as the odd damp atmosphere would permit. Of course it was impossible to think of anything but Darley. I began to wonder if this were melodrama indeed that we were in. Had the man in the room above stolen some one's jewels? Perhaps he was an escaped convict! As my eyes turned to the pile of newspapers old man Chambers was saving to sell, I took a layer from the top and began to go through them systematically. But there was nothing; no hint of crime of any magnitude during the past two weeks at least. I gave it up and sat staring into the fire, thinking, the last newspaper spread across my knees.

Some time afterward I heard with not a too pleasant realization the sound of an opening door high above in the house. I knew that besides myself and Darley there was nobody in the place. Darley must be coming downstairs. And then I heard the slur of slippered feet. I sat up and looked along the dark shop. I had not acted on the old man's advice and left the door open; but across the street two men talked beneath a light, and I was thankful for it. I sat back and waited. *Slur—slur—slip.* After the talk that had passed between Chambers and myself it was certainly an uncanny sound. Darley was coming downstairs! The man had come out of the room above!

IT was in thus waiting that the joke occurred to me. I recalled our talk of Darley's forgetting what day it was, and the paper on my knees helped, and the photograph of Regina in 1899 turned my thoughts to Canada. It reminded me of my uncle in Chicago and a book he once sent to me, and then again I heard the unpleasant slur of the footsteps of the man from the room above. Suddenly I acted on an impulse of impishness. I glanced at the date of the newspaper on my knee, and I hurriedly twirled the roller of a perpetual calendar that old man Chambers kept on his mantel shelf. It took me but a moment. Then I sat back and waited.

I don't know what I expected to see when the door at the bottom of the staircase opened and Darley came in. Chambers and I had so enlarged even the most trifling details about the man in the room above that he had grown into a legend with me. I had, then, almost a pleasant surprise on seeing that Darley was only Darley. Just a man—a pallid, strange-eyed, rather mysterious man, looking none the better for his seclusion, but only a man, nevertheless. He came behind the screen and stared at me.

"Where is he?" he asked in his strange hollow voice. "I want him. The man. There are no candles in my room. I told him about them. He has forgotten."

I did not care to tell him that Chambers was out and would not be back until late. As luck would have it a package of candles lay on the shelf in this back place, and I offered him one and he thanked me.

"Would you care to see the paper?" I invited, holding it out—the one of two weeks before.

"Oh," he said dully. "All right." And he took it and went away.

I considered it rather a fine joke. I looked forward to Chambers' return, so that I could tell him all about it, and for ten minutes I gave myself up to anticipatory joy at the thought of his face when he heard, and the ultimate outcome of the joke. Ten minutes; and then, just as I was stooping over the fire to put fresh fuel on, there came a startled shout from high up and I heard the sound of running feet. Before I could make up my mind what to do, the door burst open again and Darley was there, suddenly still, really an awful thing to look at. He seemed the most surprised man on earth.

"What's the day?" he demanded abruptly.

"Tuesday," said I promptly.

"Date?"

"The twenty-ninth."

"The—the twenty-ninth?" He glanced at the paper in his hand. "Of September?"

I pointed to the date line on the paper and waved my hand toward the calendar.

"But—" said Darley. "But—"

He looked away from the calendar, looked at me, and as I live I never want to [illegible]ence again the feeling I knew while his eyes held mine. I shall never know how long he stared at me. It seemed a day; but now I know in that time I saw a man go mad. He was questioning, questioning, questioning with his terrible eyes. But he was not calling me a liar. That might have broken the horror by provoking a quarrel. No. He was slowly and reluctantly *believing* me, and because of this, in some subtle way that I could not understand, the moment was rigid not with danger but with fear, with horror. There was suddenly something ghastly about everything. Then he turned to the door again, and I saw that his hands were shaking.

"Oh, my God!" he muttered. And he staggered out, closing the door very gently.

When Mr. Chambers returned he found me lost in a maze of sensations, impressions and thoughts. I told him what I had done. A sterner man might have been angry, but poor little Chambers fought all his life on everybody's side, as nearly as he could, and his attitude to me was simply one of questioning perplexity.

THE next morning we were made aware of a fresh disturbing attitude in the room above. When old man Chambers came downstairs, after taking up Darley's breakfast, he told me that the roomer had asked for the newspaper.

"What are we to do?" he sighed. "I dare not tell him you played a joke on him. He's not a man you can explain a joke to. I don't know what to do. I do wish you hadn't done it. I can't think what good it did you."

"There's only one thing to do," said I, plucking a paper for the thirtieth of September from the pile. "Give him this."

The poor old fellow stroked his shirtsleeves and sighed again.

"Or tell him the truth," said I. "It's one or the other."

At which he took the paper without a word and went upstairs.

Up to now an atmosphere merely mysterious had overhung the house. Now it was one of horror. I can not say in what way. Except for the daily request for his newspaper, Darley did not perceptibly change at first. But old John brought down the most alarming stories about the man's eyes and the way his hands shook. The little fellow was clean scared to death, and I am convinced that he would immediately have gone to the police, had he had anything to go to the police about. As it was, what could he tell them? The days went by, and John Chambers' fear increased.

One night—it was the seventeenth of October, or, as Darley believed, the third—our agitation of fear was further disturbed by an unexpected development. About half-past six Darley came downstairs with his hat and a shabby old raincoat, and said that he was going out. A wild ray of hope shone in old Chambers' eyes; but it vanished immediately when the roomer announced his return within an hour or two. Then Darley hurried out of the shop for the first time in ever so long, and I looked at Chambers.

"I'm after him," said I; and went without argument.

Darley went down Royal street toward the old French Market. But after walking for about fifty yards, he turned into a speakeasy, and I hung around where I could see and not be seen, while he consumed glass after glass of bootleg whiskey. Plainly he was screwing up his courage for some unattractive enterprise. Never have I seen a man drink so much at one time, and I marvelled that he remained sober, if sober he was.

At all events, he could walk straight enough when at length we set out. He climbed through the baskets and boxes that obstructed the sidewalks around the French Market and made his way down past the old United States Mint to Esplanade street and down Esplanade to the Bayou St. John. He turned to the right on the road that ran alongside the Bayou to the old Spanish Fort.

DARLEY stopped at last in a dark lane outside a house lost in black trees. There was a garage belonging to another place that had a dirty electric light bulb burning over the door, giving just light enough for me to see by. The house was old and vine-covered, with a chicken house in the unkept, weedy yard. In the darkness I thought it rather repellent, it was so quiet and hidden and lightless. By carefully creeping behind the trees which lined the lane I could get near enough to see Darley's face clearly in the lamplight, and I hope I may never again see a face holding so much of the most repugnant loathing, so much of the blindest evil passion. A child, seeing it thus, might have grown old and gone to its grave in everlasting madness.

It was the most terrifying, ghastly expression that I have ever seen on a human face. That, I am sure of. He stared down on the dark house, which lay in a kind of depression, as if he would raise his hand and strike its every brick to dust. But he did nothing. Then I heard a groan escape him and he turned away and fled into the darkness.

I followed him at a respectful distance back along the dark embankment of the canal, over the drawbridge and through the park to St. Patrick's cemetery, and here, in the dimmest corner, he stood for many minutes gripping the fence rods and staring through at some nearby grave. I heard a soft sound and was startled into realizing that this strange man wept. At last he turned away and walked rapidly back the way we had come to Royal street. We got back to the shop and an added sadness settled on old man Chambers.

My news disturbed him deeply. I found next day that all through the long hours of the night of the seventeenth he had not slept—indeed, had not even been to bed, but had sat till morning in his chair behind the screen, the door unlocked and ready.

At eight o'clock in the morning came Darley, demanding the newspaper; and fearing almost to speak to him, certainly to commit the folly of declaring a hoax, Chambers passed him the one I had set aside. Darley looked only at the date on the top, and from it to the calendar on the wall. His strange eyes were bloodshot and wild.

"Tomorrow is the fifth?" he cried.

"Yes," the old man whispered fearfully.

Darley said no more. Laughing a wild, uncanny laugh, he turned and stumbled upstairs and locked himself in his room, refusing food through all the day. In the evening he sent the black boy out for a bottle of whiskey, and in less than five minutes we heard the empty bottle shatter into fragments, and heard him laughing.

"I'm going to bed," said Chambers, a little before midnight. "Another night alone down here would send me as mad as he is. Why did he come here? What have I done?"

We went to bed, but not I, for one, to sleep. I did not undress. I sat beside the window, waiting for I know not what, yet convinced that something must speedily come.

AND come it did. I had not been in my chair half an hour before, from the room above, there came the fiercest shriek of pure horror that I shall ever hear.

Dashing to the stairs, ignoring the white and frightened face of poor old Chambers peeping tremblingly from a door, I got somehow to Darley's room, somehow with my shoulder smashed in the door. He was sitting half in, half out of bed, his whole body shaking, his wild eyes staring through the window at nothing that I could see.

"What's wrong?" I managed to gasp.

He turned those wild eyes upon me, and understood that I meant him no harm.

"Stay with me!" he begged. "Stay and don't let me sleep. I must not sleep. When I sleep I see the most awful things. I must not sleep! You understand? I want to sleep, but you must not let me."

"But what—?"

"Don't talk," said he.

And so we sat through until dawn, he sitting shaking on the edge of the bed, I standing by the window watching him, neither of us saying a word. At daybreak he stood limply and fumbled for his clothes.

"Today is the fifth of October," he said.

Dawn brought, too, the shattered John Chambers and my clothes. When we were dressed, Darley said to me, addressing the bed:

"Stay with me today."

"Yes," said I.

"I have to make up my mind before night," he said. "It's not easy."

And so out of sympathy for him I stayed in that strange room, watching his shaking, listening to his whispering, seeing that he was comfortable but uttering scarcely a word. The most fantastic day in my life.

He seemed altogether altered. He appeared to lean on me, obey me, look to me as he might have done, long ago, to his father. John Chambers hovered up and down uselessly, taking his cue from me and saying nothing. Toward nightfall, when the blue shades in the room turned to black, the trembling seized Darley again and he would not leave my side and kept asking the hours to midnight.

"You are a kind Christian man," he said once; "the only one who has been kind to me for a long time. Oh, such a long time. Life itself has been cruel to me. You are very kind. You are helping me to be strong, to keep a grip—you and the dreams. Those dreams! Every night for a week—! I'm mad. I realize that I'm mad, but I can appreciate your kindness. Fancy today being the fifth of October! I couldn't believe it. It seemed all wrong. But I am going to be strong. Those dreams have terrified me. What time is it?"

"Seven o'clock," said I.

"Seven o'clock? Of the evening of October fifth? Are you sure?"

He arose and crossed to the chest and opened a drawer. I saw him reach for something, and, instinctively, I stepped close to him. When he faced me again he had a revolver in his hand. Before I realized my action I had snatched it from him. But he did not protest.

"Yes; take it from me, please. And however I may ask, do not give it back to me before midnight. Keep it from me until the sixth is here. I shall be safe then. Be careful, though. It is loaded—loaded, mind you, in every chamber."

I invited him downstairs. "The old man is a very kind man. He will be good to you. And it is more comfortable there."

Without speaking he waited for me to lead the way. Chambers was scared out of his life at first, but no man could have been gentler than Darley and soon he was reassured.

"You are very good," the boarder whispered—whispered, however, without looking at us. "I shall always like you." Then he turned to me with a little of the old fire blazing in his eyes. "Put that gun away! I can not trust myself until this day is gone."

I slipped the weapon into my pocket.

A long time passed before he spoke again. And when he did his roving eye chanced to espy the picture of Regina in 1899.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Regina," old man Chambers muttered.

"Ah!" And after difficult thought—"A man may start again there—live and forget, eh?"

"A man may," old John admitted.

"Ah!"

TEN o'clock chimed—eleven; and a wild fever of emotion possessed Darley. As the hands of the old clock turned round on their last journey for that day, he fell into a loud weeping, and began to talk.

"I will tell you," he said. "I must before it all goes. Everything seems to be going now. Dates—I don't know where I am. I didn't know the fifth of October was so near."

He shuddered. Then he said:

"Once I loved a woman. She loved me, too—once. But I am not much of a man, and another came who was all man. He took her from me, and she liked to go. It broke my heart. But there was a justness somewhere, and her heart came to be broken too. I heard of the way he treated her. He killed her. He did. Not directly. He broke her soul into little bits and took five years to do it, and then one night she died, and left him as she had left me, and neither of us had her. It was on the fifth of October. Last year—"

He glanced at the calendar on the wall and passed his hand across his eyes.

"I said I would kill him," he went on. "For a whole year I have said I would kill him. I made up my mind that when the date came round again I would send him to her. I have often gone and looked at his house and gloated over what was waiting for him. I bought that revolver. For weeks I have kept it loaded in every chamber, waiting for tonight. It is the fifth of October tonight.

"But I shall not kill him now. I have a feeling that if I do not kill him tonight I shall never kill him, and I can not do it now. I have seen him in dreams—just what he would look like, all smashed up!

"I could have done it a little while ago, before I had the dreams, but now I am all shaken up by what I see when I sleep. I have seen him just as he would look. Dreadful—

"But I still might have killed him if you had not been kind to me. Nobody had been kind to me since she was kind to me, years ago.

"She loved him. I don't think she would have liked me to kill him.

"Keep that gun from me. I may take it and kill him yet, but you must not let me. There is time. What time is it?"

HE looked at the clock. It was nearly twelve. Old man Chambers leaned forward and dropped a few fresh lumps of coal on the fire, just as the hands of the clock met. There was a little whir and the clock began to strike.

Darley looked up smiling, happy for the first time since I had met him.

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Midnight," I whispered.

"It is the sixth of October now?"

"Yes."

"Thank God!"

He arose and stood, strangely peaceful.

"I have been strong!" he said. "I did not kill him. I waited and was strong. I shall never kill him now. The time is past."

He looked from us again to where above the mantel the old photograph was framed.

"What place is that?" he asked.

"Regina," said Chambers. "In Canada."

"A man may start again there—live and forget?"

"Yes."

The man from the room above stooped and took up his hat and coat.

"I am going to Regina," he said. "I will ask somebody the way. Look at my hands." And he thrust them before us proudly, thin and shaking things. "Look at them! They are clean! No blood there! It is a beautiful feeling. If those awful dreams had not come to me and you had not been so kind, I might be a murderer. I thank you. Good-by."

We heard him go along the shop and out and close the door. Soon his footsteps vanished down the street.

We sat there a while silent, each of us busy with his own thoughts. I felt that an oppressive weight had been lifted from me. The strange, wild remarks of Darley had unnerved me, but now I began to feel more composed.

"Thank the Lord!" muttered little Chambers, stirring to poke the fire into a flame. "I am so glad he has gone. It has been dreadful. I am an older man than I was before it happened."

It was some time afterwards that I drew the revolver from my pocket.

"Good Lord!" I cried. "I wonder where he was!"

"When?" said Chambers.

"On the fifth of October," I replied. "The night he first came here. And I wonder what lies behind the shutters of that dark house on the bank of the canal. Look!"

I spilled the cartridges out in the palm of my hand. *Two of them had been fired.*

I Had a Fortune on My Back

(*Continued from page* 31)

to my hips. No beauty prize winner would be able to boast of a more beautiful back than mine.

Getting this masterpiece tattooed on my back was a long and tedious operation. The pain as the artist inserted the needles was intense. My back grew tender, so that it was necessary to use a narcotic to permit the task to go on.

In a mirror, I studied the progress of this work on my back. It astounded me. Truly—Pincini's skill was great. There was Icarus, in the full glare of a bright, glowing sun, lying on a heap of feathers. Above hovered Daedalus, while beyond was the clear blue of the sea and faintly off in the distance, the purple hills of Greece.

It did not need a connoisseur to see that it was a perfect work, that it exhibited the ripened talent of a skilful draughtsman, that it was the result of years of training in a difficult, forgotten art. Everyone who was privileged to see the picture as it neared completion pronounced it beautiful.

THE final result left me speechless. My back, once so plain, was distinguished. Like that of most beauty, the distinction was skin deep. But what did that matter? I had my masterpiece. Wherever I went it had to go with me. I would not part with it. I couldn't. It was as much a part of me as my eyes, my nose, my face, only, I agree with you, a trifle handsomer. Furthermore, it was unique in one particular: It could never be stolen.

Highwaymen might take my money. A girl might steal my heart. But no one could rob me of my picture. So I thought. I was wrong.

Old Pincini was enthusiastic. His eyes glowed as each day the gorgeous back took on more grandeur. Under his delicate touch more and more beauty sprang into being as he added the details that enhanced the splendor of his creation. Finally, he put in the dainty lights and shades on the central figure, the body of Icarus.

As he added these touches, Pincini murmured:

"I have never, never done anything better than this. Alas, I shall never do another."

The aged artist was right. I went to his home for the last sitting at which he was to put his signature to the picture.

At the door I was met by his wife. Tearfully, she sobbed out the sad news—in the night the master had died of a stroke!

Mrs. Pincini bitterly mourned her husband's death. And the very next day she called on me for the five thousand francs I had promised him.

During the months I suffered for the sake of art, I could earn little. The cost of living and unwise expenditures left a remainder of my windfall of only four thousand francs.

The widow was furious. She burst out in a wild rage. What, name of a dog and a

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few cats, did I mean? The sacred memory of the famed Pincini, the honor of the Pincini reputation was at stake. Did I think I could bargain for the gift of Pincini's genius?

What I had on my villainous back was Pincini's masterpiece. Did I think I could buy *that* like stale sausage in the butcher-shop—at cut-rates? If she could, she would have torn it off my back. At that, I would have been obligated to her for she would have done me an everlasting service.

Within a week, my dear friend, Mrs. Pincini, returned. I was not overjoyed to see her for by that time it had been necessary to pay some bills and my capital was reduced to 3,200 francs. She agreed that they were bona fide, but she had been to school and could add up to 5,000.

Out of my hotel stormed the widow, swept by a thousand furies.

AS soon as she was gone, I packed my belongings in preparation for a much needed vacation—in jail. I answered each knock on the door with fear for I expected the police. Such a happy event was not to be. Something pleasanter than mere arrest and judgment for debt lay in store for me.

Widow Pincini turned magnanimous. She declared the contract between me and her beloved husband null and void for non-payment by me. Her generosity led her further. To her native town, she presented as a tribute to her extreme love and affection, her late husband's masterpiece—*The Fall of Icarus!*

What could the grateful municipality do but accept?

Figure it out. *The Fall of Icarus* belonged by every legal right to the citizens of the town. I was just as much a piece of public property as one of the statues in the public square or a painting in the city museum. Not I, mind you, but the painting of Icarus.

The Fall of Icarus was on my back. It was part of me but not mine. My back was mine, but I did not own *The Fall of Icarus.* I—I was still myself, I was also something else. After all, it was *my* back. No one could take that away from me. The picture also constituted my back. What a tangle! What a predicament!

In an effort to escape from this problem, I slipped out of town at night like a thief. I felt like a criminal. But the only crime I had committed was being the custodian of a painting that was mine as far as my body was concerned but not mine as far as the decoration went.

I did not want to steal the painting belonging to the people of a city. Anyhow, I was the only one who could steal it. I did not want to be dishonest but go where I would, the picture stuck close to me.

At last I reached the capital, where I hoped to forget everything and lose myself. For a time, things went well and I began to breathe freely. I even dared to admire the painting as I postured before a mirror in my room behind closed doors. After all, it was a thing of beauty.

One morning, I passed a public bath. I have always enjoyed vapor baths and I sprang down the steps light-heartedly. That was almost the last gay moment of my life.

Scarcely had I taken off my clothes and stepped into the steam corridor when the proprietor seized me. He was a patriotic citizen and he recognized the painting from its description in the press. Under no conditions, he notified me, would he allow me to exhibit the masterpiece without the written consent of the municipality to which it belonged.

Into my clothes I was hustled and out of the establishment. I was too surprised at what had occurred to realize what this meant. I slunk to my hotel feeling as if I carried the brand of a convict.

Newspapers were full of the incident. It was the topic of the day in every wine-cellar. The hero of the drama was Icarus. I, who bore him, was the culprit.

Next I went to a beach. The cut of my bathing suit could not hide the brilliant picture which even showed through the thin texture. Again, I was ordered off. The authorities refused to let me enter the water. They notified me that I would have to wear a heavy bathing suit that would not expose my back.

No sooner did I seek to comply with these requirements, when it was decided, after due deliberation, that salt water might prove injurious to the work of art and I was served an injunction forcing me to refrain from sea bathing.

UP to this point, I felt irritated and annoyed. And yet, I was not frightened by these restrictions. To escape, I wrote to my concern asking to be sent to some other country, where I was to become an assistant-manager.

I wasted little time in arranging my affairs and quitting town. With a sigh of relief I settled myself on the train. In the comfortable upholstery of my chair, I buried Icarus deep and, I hoped, forever.

At the frontier, I left the train. The whole force of customs officers, supplemented by the local police, was there. The huge delegation did not offer me the key to the city or treat me like an honored guest. The customs officer waved aside my passport.

"You may go," he explained, "but you cannot take the painting with you. It is necessary that the law forbidding the exportation of famous works of art be strictly enforced. Too many of our nation's painting and statues have gone to enrich museums in other countries. Will the gentleman please remove his shirt?"

Arguments were useless. I possessed a valuable Pincini which must stay there. I was turned back with a reprimand and a warning. And yet I had not broken the law, but I had committed the heinous offense of attempting to escape with a painting that belonged to a whole city.

Of course, I appealed to the Luxemburg government. My native land could do nothing for me. *The Fall of Icarus,* Andreas Pincini's masterpiece, must not leave the country.

My firm gave me as much assistance as possible but when it appeared that I was a prisoner, limited in my movements, they gave me a month's notice. I roamed over the country until my money was gone. I stayed in a town I didn't even like. I stayed because I got a job in a clothing house.

It was a German art expert who got the bright notion of seeking me out. His name was Herr Jahrdenn. I shall always be grateful to him.

HERR JAHRDENN procured written permission from the township to inspect the masterpiece and I was forced, in the middle of a busy day, to leave my office and allow him to study and photograph the wonderful *Fall of Icarus.*

Finally, Herr Jahrdenn went away and I breathed a sigh of relief. I thought he rang down the curtain, but the play had only begun. This Jahrdenn was one of Germany's foremost critics and, in an article, he set forth his opinion that the painting was a spurious Pincini, the work of some pupil whom the master had employed in his declining years.

Thus began the "Icarian Controversy," that lasted fully two years and engaged the interest of a dozen nations. Several art magazines sprang forward with proofs of the painting's authenticity. My sworn statement taken as to when the work was done was thrown out on the ground that while being tattooed I was under the influence of opiates.

Now began a new occupation, one for which I had not bargained and for which I was not paid. Scarcely a day passed without my being forced to leave my work and parade my bare back to the gaze of a group of critics. Even at night, Icarus was dragged from bed as I slept and subjected to a critical examination. The federal government was behind the city in every move, and behind me were critics and more critics in heated argument.

My employers told me how sorry they were for my plight, but they could not employ a salesman who had to serve as "Exhibit A" half the time. The day I was dismissed, a dignified commission arrived from the University of Copenhagen. For five hours, I was forced to sit before a lot of Great Danes while they fought over the painting.

I ceased to hear from my family or my friends in Luxemburg. I lost touch with friends once close to me and planned to

The March issue of THE DANCE Magazine begins the story of Fanchon and Marco, a brother and sister who were once an obscure pair struggling to gain a foothold in the world of the theater. A certain idea came to them, and as a result they are known from coast to coast as the producers of the stage spectacles that delight the patrons of theaters on the West Coast. Read "The Big Idea of Fanchon and Marco," and learn what courageous people do to overcome apparently insuperable obstacles.

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submerge my identity and slip across the border as a nameless wanderer.

It seemed impossible for me to reach the border. Naturally, I found myself drifting into the ranks of the anarchists. An upheaval of the existing authority would mean that I could leave the country. I became more and more rabid in my beliefs. Evening after evening, I spent in the public houses and squares making speeches. Here was the anomaly of a masterpiece rebelling against the very government that owned it.

TOGETHER with about thirty of my companions, I was rounded up. We spent three days in a stuffy jail and then the order came to deport us as undesirable aliens. That sounded good.

When I heard this dreadful news, there in the dirty, stuffy lockup, hope sprang up anew. With an outraged government behind me, perhaps I would be flung across the border.

We were squeezed into a securely locked cattle-car, a strange place for a masterpiece.

I could scarcely restrain my joy when we were lined up and marched toward the gate which lead to the border. Two by two, my companions were sent through the gate. The line dwindled. Soon it would be my turn. Closer and closer I moved. My chance came. With an eager step, I advanced, but so did a corporal and three soldiers. Icarus got a glimpse of the border as I was turned back. This time I went under guard back to the town that owned the picture.

For weeks they kept me in the town jail, although officially I should have been kept in the museum. I was well treated, but I protested against my detention. In desperation, I threatened suicide. At that they released me with strict instructions not to leave the city.

I was starving and on my back I bore a fortune. The death of Pincini increased the worth of his works. Though some still doubted the authenticity of *The Fall of Icarus,* it was certainly worth at least five or six times the amount I had bargained to pay for it.

So matters stood until a memorable spring day. Almost two years had passed since that day when old Pincini and I met on the steps of the museum. Lying on my precious back in the straw, I pondered on the vagaries of life. Never had I heard of an unhappier work of art than mine.

My mind was being entertained by many nice thoughts when a soldier plodded through the rain, up the muddy path to my stable. Before his head appeared at the doorway, I knew what he would say. Of course, I was wanted at the museum again. How could they do without their dear masterpiece?

With no hope that any good would come of this summons, I followed the officer to the City Hall, where he said the directors of the Gallery and the City Council were waiting.

As we neared the City Hall an idea occurred to me. I was counting on the soldier to help me, knowing him to be a good fellow.

"Be a good scout and lend me some money," I said. "I need some medicine badly."

The officer seemed amused at the idea that I wanted to "borrow" money—I, the most abject of paupers without a ghost of a chance to earn a sou. But he willingly gave me a silver piece and I stopped at a druggist's while he waited outside.

WITH a small bottle carefully hidden in my coat pocket I followed the officer into the vast Hall of the Council Room. I was ordered to remove my shirt and the usual examination of my back followed. After that there was a consultation in one corner. Soon the Mayor came forward and addressed me:

"We find it necessary to remind you that you must take better care of *The Fall of Icarus* in the future. You should be honored at the privilege of wearing it on your back. We have been lenient with you in the past, but the time has come for greater precaution to insure the safety of this work of art. We have thought it advisable that the picture be displayed every afternoon in the museum. You will therefore come to the museum every afternoon from one to five and occupy a chair in the main entrance; your back, of course, fully bared."

I leaped to my feet. "I refuse to do it," I hurled defiantly at the surprised councilmen. "I refuse to be a slave any longer. I will not spend my afternoons playing easel to this damned painting!"

The Mayor shrugged his shoulders. "Then to the jail with you for attempting to injure a work of art owned by the State and also for being a vagrant." He signalled to the guards to seize me.

"Wait!" I shouted. "If anyone dares to touch me I'll dash this bottle of sulphuric acid down my back. I'll destroy Icarus, I swear." I held the uncorked bottle aloft so they could all see the red poison label it bore.

"What—what do you want?" The Mayor was shaking in his boots.

"I shall make a red ruin of *The Fall of Icarus* unless you promise to pay me a hundred francs a day for taking care of the picture and displaying it."

"Put the bottle away. I promise." The Mayor moved toward me, but I waved him back.

"Something else. You must promise to let me buy the painting as soon as I can save enough money, and at a price set by an impartial committee of experts. In the meantime I will display it as you wish."

The Mayor promised. The Council promised.

IN a few days I had bridged the gap from pauperism to comparative affluence. I insisted on receiving an immediate advance on my salary with which I purchased clothes and hired a room at the inn. I was again beginning to feel like my former self. In another few days I received notice of my appointment as assistant curator of the museum and I was given a uniform and insignia.

That was almost three years ago. During that time I have accumulated more than fifteen thousand francs and I have hope that the period of my servitude will not last longer than three years more, although *The Fall of Icarus* steadily increases in value.

Recently an American tourist took an interest in my story and gave me a real tip on how to get rich quicker. He told me to sell photographs of myself and *The Fall of Icarus* to the visitors at the museum. Thanks to this idea I have tripled my savings and have almost half enough to buy the painting from the municipality.

I have been asked what I intend doing with the painting once I have purchased it. Strange, how one becomes attached to such things. I like the idea of keeping it. As a matter of fact, it has turned out that I have made a rather good investment, for I shall always be able to earn a good living exhibiting my painting. One of the very largest freak and wax-work museums has offered me a very tempting contract as soon as I am free to accept.

At any rate, until my case is forgotten, I shall be unable to leave the country. But once I have my personal freedom maybe I will remain here and become a citizen. One thought tickles me. I shall probably go through life turning my back on these people.

The Mad Mystic and the American Beauty

(*Continued from page* 29)

mount to the young officer's face and he spoke sharply.

"Who gave thee orders to shoot dumb animals!" he cried. "Next time there will be a *knouting*. Go now and try to trace this *rasputnik*."

That was the second time I had heard my reddish-haired abductor called *rasputnik*. First by Stefanovich and now by the young Cossack officer. Translated into English the Russian word *rasputnik* means *rascal* or perhaps more exactly *corrupt*. Later in life that appellation was changed to the name Rasputin, and the gray-eyed ruffian rose to the highest power in Russia, the advisor and confessor of the Czar and Czarina. But at the time of that first encounter with him, Rasputin was still only a youth of nineteen, a wild, loose-living man who turned his hand to highway robbery, horse-thieving, and occasionally to the trade of postilion. He was unknown outside his own dirty little village of Pokrovskoie. Indeed his people were of the lowest. His father, who was also a horse-thief, bore no other name than the given name Efim; and he could neither read nor write.

That was the great Rasputin's heritage, and he grew up leading the most corrupt sort of life—a leader even in crime. When nicknamed Rasputin he accepted it with pride, boasting of the fact after he had become an important figure at the Russian court. *"Rasputin I have been and Rasputin I shall remain,"* he said of himself, though his real name was Gregory Efimovich as the archives of Tobolsk will show. Those archives also record the fact that Rasputin was twice before the Siberian courts for criminal offenses: once for the theft of a horse for which he was publicly

whipped with the *knout* on his bare back, and a second time for assault on an old beggar woman and two minors.

"Come!" the officer said to me. "Let us hurry back to the sledge. Perhaps your mother has returned. I sent soldiers to search. Fortunately we were close behind you on the road." He offered me his arm and led the way out of the cabin. "Now let me walk ahead of you through the snow and tramp it down."

Mother was not at the sledge. Stefanovich was gone, too. Only the postilion, who had recovered his senses by then, was in sight; and he sat moaning and holding his head. He told us that Stefanovich had disappeared a few minutes before we came, having first searched under the robes and found our purses.

"YOUR servant has robbed you," the officer said, "but we shall find him."

I protested that Stefanovich would not rob us, but the officer raised cynical eyebrows.

"You don't know these Siberians."

"I don't care for the money!" I cried. "It is my mother. What have they done with her?"

"Get into the sledge and I will escort you into Pokrovskoie and find an inn. Then the search for your mother shall continue—we will bring her to you when she is found. Come!"

I was reluctant to leave the spot where I had last seen mother. My heart was sick with fear for her, but he convinced me that it was the thing to do. He tucked me into the sledge, seated himself beside me and ordered the postilion to drive into Pokrovskoie.

At the inn a room was found for me, food and tea were brought, and I was assured that everything was being done to find mother. The young officer was most solicitous. As he left me, bowing from the hips, he asked permission to present himself and inquire my name. When I told him, he bowed again, taking my hand and kissing it.

"Lieutenant Zacharoff," he murmured politely.

At about two in the morning a number of horses drew up at the inn and the party rapped loudly. Then a few minutes later steps sounded outside my door—a knock—and mother's voice.

Trembling and crying I flung open the door and clasped mother to my heart. She gave a little gasping cry and buried her face in my neck. Behind her stood Lieutenant Zacharoff and Stefanovich. The coarse, homely features of the latter were working convulsively as he watched us—and when I looked up again tears were streaming down his bearded cheeks. Lieutenant Zacharoff stood stiff and military, his handsome, dark eyes fixed on me.

"Stefanovich," I said, smiling through my tears, "they told me you had stolen our purses and run away—but I knew you hadn't."

"It was he who found your mother," Lieutenant Zacharoff said. "You are fortunate in having a servant that is honest. I apologize."

Mother gave a convulsive shudder. She was pale and looked more terrible than I had thought she could look. In her eyes was a great fear, a terrible look of horror, and she could not let go of me, but clung sobbing and shaking.

"At least *you* are all right!" she kept saying.

"Yes, mother. We are both all right," I answered. But at that she clung closer than before and her body trembled against mine. I saw Lieutenant Zacharoff and Stefanovich lower their eyes, and the latter suggested that we go to bed and rest. Mother looked up at him then and the expression of horror in her eyes was almost hysterical.

"A doctor!" she said. "You will get a doctor, Stefanovich."

"At this hour?" he questioned.

"At any hour!" Lieutenant Zacharoff cried promptly. "I will bring him."

"Why, mother?" But she made no reply.

The doctor arrived within half an hour. He looked unwilling and frightened. Lieutenant Zacharoff stood close beside him looking fierce. There was a secret conference between the doctor and mother, and after it she was haggard and white, nor did the expression of fear leave her. She lay on the outside of the bed beside me all dressed, refusing to get under the covers, and during the remaining hours of the night I heard her crying into her pillow and whispering father's name in pitiful tones. I knew that something terrible had happened but I did not know what.

NEXT morning we left Pokrovskoie under the escort of Lieutenant Zacharoff, who went with us for a distance of one hundred miles. He said he must leave us then as he was not permitted to go further. We were sorry to see him go. When he bent over my hand to kiss it, he pressed it.

"I hope we may meet in St. Petersburg some day." He looked into my eyes with an expression that made my girlish heart leap, though I scarcely knew why. I liked him very much. I thought him exceedingly handsome and kind—but love was still far from my mind.

When finally we reached the mine, after six weeks of traveling from St. Petersburg, we found father completely recovered—as we should have realized he would be. He was greatly astonished to see us, but more than anything else, he was disturbed.

"You cannot stay here!" he exclaimed. "You must return at once."

But mother shook her head, giving father a long, strange look that made him eye her sharply, studying her pallid cheeks, noting the look of fear in her usually brave eyes.

"What has happened?" he demanded.

Mother made no reply, but later I knew they had a private talk and after that father said no more about our going away. Three months later mother suddenly died. I never was told what happened, but something told me it was connected with the fright she had received in the village of Pokrovskoie.

From the day of mother's death, father changed greatly. Taciturn as his own Siberian peasants, or *mujicks* as he called them. With me, however, he was exceedingly gentle. I remember particularly the day when a heavily sealed letter arrived for me and proved to be a very formal but very friendly letter from Lieutenant Zacharoff. Father read it and smiled teasingly. Then he bent closer and studied the coat of arms on it.

"Why those are the arms of one of Russia's most noble families," he said. "Your polite young Cossack officer is no simple soldier. He is Count Dmitri of Zacharoff, cousin of Prince Felix Yussopov. Two years ago he was sent here into Siberia to serve in the Cossack guards as punishment for his suspected liberalistic tendencies."

I answered that letter, and a curious correspondence sprang up between us, very correct and formal on his side and very romantic and naive on mine. It kept up during the entire year I remained at the mine and he promised to meet father and me at the point where he had left mother and me the previous year.

"WE shall leave here," I wrote him, "just as soon as the *tundras* are well frozen and permit of passage over them. I will tell you the exact date later. Father is taking me to St. Petersburg where I shall go to school."

Things turned out rather differently from our plans, however. When it came time for father and me to leave, he suddenly declared he could not trust the mine with the Russian superintendent. There was rumor of a rebellion. All of Russia was in upheaval. The *mujicks* were becoming restless. The Cossacks were making trouble. They had shot an entire family of peasants. Really it was murder.

"I don't mind staying, father," I told him. "We can go later when things are all right."

"No!" he answered with a worried look. "You mustn't remain here if there is going to be trouble. You will have to make the trip to St. Petersburg alone with Stefanovich. I will write to that young Zacharoff also, and he will see that you get across the worst provinces in safety."

So faithful old Stefanovich and I set out on the return journey alone. I wasn't afraid for myself and didn't know enough about the real danger of the coming rebellion to be afraid for father. I was only fifteen and father had not told me how bad things were.

Lieutenant Zacharoff met us at Obolsk with an escort of eight big Cossack soldiers. He greeted me very warmly but formally, kissing my hand and bowing low with stiff back and clicking heels. He was so handsome and his dark eyes shone so delightedly that my heart gave a happy bound. It pleased me, too, to see the familiar way he spoke to Stefanovich—showing that he trusted him.

"Only one thing desolates me," he said. "My military orders make it necessary for me to take you through the village of Pokrovskoie. Otherwise I should have avoided it."

"But I don't mind," I told him. "I am not afraid. I know that with you and your soldiers I am perfectly safe."

"Our lives are in your service," he murmured fervently.

On the outskirts of the village, when we entered it a few days later, we met a procession of peasants following a monk bearing a cross. The road was snow-covered but trodden hard. We drew up to one side to let them pass, but as they came abreast of us the monk with the cross raised his head to look at us, his gray eyes flashing to mine and holding them with heavy stare.

I gave a little cry and gasp. My heart seemed to stop beating, for the monk who

headed the procession was Gregory Efimovich Rasputin, the ruffian with the reddish, unkempt beard who had snatched me from the sledge that night a year ago during the blizzard. Stefanovich cried out also.

"The *rasputnik!*" he muttered, and started to urge his pony aggressively forward—but the monk stared at him from his terrible eyes and held the cross out in front of him. Behind him the peasants murmured in a threatening tone.

"Yes, the *rasputnik!*" the monk cried. "The corrupt, the sinner! But now I have repented. Who so repents is saved. I am a servant of the church." He raised his voice and it took on the sonorous quality of the priests of the Greek church. "I gather money for the erection of His temples." He stepped boldly to Lieutenant Zacharoff's side and held out his hand. "*Barin* (meaning master or lord), you will give something."

ZACHAROFF looked at him with flaming eyes and I saw his hand gripping the handle of his Cossack whip. He started to raise it but let his hand drop. He could not strike a man who wore the clothes of the church and bore a crucifix in his hands. And the monk knew it. He smiled suavely and moved to my pony.

"You, little high-born, you will give. No?" His gray eyes looked piercingly at me and I felt my blood freeze. "I say you shall give. If not now, later. Our paths cross for the second time. They will cross again—and the third time—" there was a prophetic menace in his overpowering regard. Then he dropped the tone of threat and his voice became suave. His sensuous lips parted in a smile. "The third time our paths cross, little high-born, thou wilt be a grown woman." He had used the diminutive, familiar "thou" to me, and somehow it was like an insult. The heavy lids had dropped down over his bold eyes and he went on softly. "Thy destiny and mine, little high-born, shall carry us to high places—and thou shalt kneel before me." Then he raised the cross above his head, stepping back to the head of his procession and it moved on. His boldness was breath taking, his assurance such that he overrode all obstacles.

At the inn we learned more about this strange man. His conversion had occurred shortly after our last passage through Pokrovskoie. While acting as postilion, he had driven a priest to a neighboring town about thirty miles distant. He and the priest fell to discussing religion and the priest was so impressed with the young Rasputin's keen intelligence and psychic power that he urged him to enter the church, expatiating on the benefits to the body as well as to the soul.

Rasputin had evidently been greatly struck by the argument, for on his return from the trip he donned a monk's garb and set out to gather money for the construction of churches, in which work he was extremely successful. It is to be noted, however, that there is no record of any church ever being built from the money he obtained. On the other hand, the family of Rasputin rapidly rose from extreme poverty and social insignificance to considerable wealth and importance. These things are matters of record and not just my own biased opinion. But there is no record Rasputin ever belonged to a monastery. Rasputin's prophecy that we should meet again—and in high places—seemed absurd.

We left Pokrovskoie that same day, traveling in a sledge from there. Two days later we bid a regretful farewell to Lieutenant Zacharoff and his eight huge Cossacks. He pressed my hand significantly and kissed it with tender caress that could not but stir the romantic in me.

"Take good care of thy mistress, Stefanovich," he warned. And to me he said: "You will write me?"

"Of course I shall," I answered—and I did. During the next five years that I was in the schools at St. Petersburg we kept up a constant correspondence—romantic, sentimental, reserved. As I grew more mature my dreams became more elevated, and Lieutenant Zacharoff became a sort of ideal—less real and more imaginary. The five years between fourteen and nineteen bring great changes in a girl.

Father came down from the mines twice a year to see me. The rest of the time I spent as any Russian girl of good family might. I spoke Russian, of course, like a Russian. I visited in the best families and took part in all social activities of that strange period.

St. Petersburg—indeed all Russia—was in a state of nervous tension. People were almost hysterical and turned to the most extraordinary sort of entertainments. Spiritism had a tremendous vogue. There were quantities of mediums and people were going to spirit seances almost as if they were religious meetings. Many people had their own ouija boards which they consulted. Even the most intelligent men and women seemed to be under a psychic cloud. Superstition and intrigue ran through all their gatherings, colored private conversation, and even influenced the policy of foreign negotiations. The Czar and Czarina and the imperial ministers were swayed by the spirit messages that came to them through "mediums" of questionable integrity. I, myself, could never take such messages seriously, though I must confess that strange prophecies were made that later proved true.

ONE day in March of 1896 there came to me through the American Consulate the word that a sudden uprising had taken place in Siberia. Father's mine had been attacked, but they had no details. A week later I was advised that father had been killed.

It was too terrible to be true. I refused to believe it.

"Stefanovich," I cried, "we must go and find father!"

So once more I started out on that weary journey over the railways that were heartbreakingly slow and across the interminable frozen swamps that were getting ready to thaw. Then the mountains—and at last the mine! I should say, what had *been* the mine. Every building was destroyed. We questioned the *mujicks* of the surrounding country but they shrugged their shoulders, looking blank—as only a Siberian peasant can.

"Who can tell?" they answered us, and I knew they were afraid to answer. "The great *Barin*, thy father, has not been seen since the attack on the mine. Who are we to know what happened to him?"

"We can learn nothing here," Stefano-

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vich said to me in English. "They know but they will not tell. It is evident that thy father—"

"No, Stefanovich! I will not believe that he is dead!"

"At least it cannot benefit us to stay on here in the mountains. Thy father would look for thee in St. Petersburg—if he lived. And remember that soon the *tundras* will begin to thaw—and then we shall be unable to get back to St. Petersburg until the freezing again—if indeed we are able to now, which I fear."

"Very well, Stefanovich," I answered dully. "Let us go." I looked around me at the terrible, snow-clad mountains as grim and taciturn as the *mujicks* that inhabited them. "Let us go quickly. I have lost too much here. I hate these treacherous mountains."

But we had already wasted too much time. The great swamps were growing soft. Trails through them were difficult to find. Stefanovich grew daily more concerned.

"I think—I fear that we would be wise to head for the nearest town—and stay there till the swamps freeze again. Pokrovskoie is not too far. My people are there. You will be safe with them."

"Yes," I agreed. "I don't care. You arrange everything."

It was the first of May when for the third time I entered the little lost village of Pokrovskoie—a grown woman now. There was no handsome young Cossack officer with an escort. No handsome dark eyes that looked fervently into mine. My heart was dull. We had left St. Petersburg in such haste that I had not had time to advise Lieutenant Zacharoff of my trip. And it was the irony of my strange fate that he, after seven years' exile in Siberia, had been pardoned and had returned to St. Petersburg during the very week that I had started on my search.

There were other strange events awaiting me, also, there in the village of Pokrovskoie—the curious fulfilment of a prophecy made by a monk with straggling reddish beard. "The third time our paths cross, little high-born," he had said, "thou wilt be a grown woman—and then thou shalt give."

Great changes had come to me during the five years since that encounter on the road with Rasputin carrying a cross and heading a procession. Equally great changes had come to him. He had grown constantly in importance. He had married and was becoming known as a prophet. His disciples were many and he was beginning to be called the "Saint". He had evolved a doctrine of salvation that was exceedingly simple and appealed to the illiterate peasants—just as later years it appealed to the degenerate group that made up the Russian court. He said: *"For the salvation of the soul it is necessary to repent. In order to repent it is necessary to sin. Therefore if a soul is to be saved, it must begin by sinning."* And Rasputin took upon himself the labor of making his flock sin. They held their meetings at midnight out in the open air of the fields beyond the village.

It was thus that I came upon them one night when, unknown to Stefanovich or his people, I had slipped out of their rude dwelling and was seeking respite from the dull ache in my heart. I hoped by being alone under the great vault of the Siberian skies that I could find peace.

The light of a fire first drew my attention. Then I saw figures moving about it—and I moved nearer, staying well in the dark shadows however. A weird ceremony was going on, the like of which I had never seen—and I could not imagine its significance.

There were twenty or more people—men and women of all ages. They had dug a pit in the ground and thrown in wood, starting a fire. Over the fire they had placed a tripod from which hung a kettle containing incense and aromatic herbs. It was like a gathering of witches. As I drew nearer they joined hands and began dancing about the fire and its tripod. As they danced they chanted: *"Our sin! Our repentance! Pardon our sin because of our repentance!"*

Around and around they went, their voices growing more excited and raucous. Their dancing had become jerky leaps. It was evident that they were working themselves up to an hysterical emotional crisis.

Suddenly a tall, bearded figure dressed in a monk's smock separated itself from the leaping figures and threw something on the flames that extinguished them, leaving only glowing embers by the light of which the mad participants of the ceremony took on grotesque shapes. The raucous chanting gave place immediately—as by signal—to wild cries.

Covering my face with my hands, I gave a gasping cry and turned to flee from a scene that I could not witness any longer—but even as I turned a huge hand reached out from the darkness and caught me by the arm.

"Little high-born," came a voice that made me shudder, "our paths have crossed for the third time—and thou shalt give!"

For the second time Alice Stafford had felt the clutch of the terrible Rasputin. Once she had been rescued, but now—

Her destiny was mysteriously woven with that of the man she hated. You cannot afford to miss the thrilling episodes of this amazing drama. Watch for the next instalment. It will appear in April TRUE STRANGE STORIES.

The First Time That I Died

(*Continued from page 25*)

actually said, it was understood that we were shortly to become man and wife.

But the happiness that sprang from my growing financial success, my rise in the social scale, my love for Madeline, seemed ever menaced by the beckonings of the dreadful shadow. I believed that could I but discover what words of Dr. Prince had evoked that threatening presence, I might be able to grapple with it. Nor, when I discussed my phobia with him, could Dr. Prince bring any light into the darkness.

ONE night I had gone with Madeline to a theater. Then, taking her home, I kissed her good night and started for my apartment. On the way, I bought a newspaper. My mind was filled with thoughts of Madeline. I could not sleep, so I lit a cigar, sank into a luxurious armchair and opened the paper. Almost instantly my eyes fell on this headline:

SHOCK RESTORES AMNESIA VICTIM TO FIRST SELF.

Slowly I read and reread the article. Then I read again and again how a man who had been a victim of amnesia for seven years had been restored when an explosion suddenly took place behind him.

I let the paper slip from my limp fingers. I felt dreadfully ill. Now I knew what words of Dr. Prince had affected me so much. He had said:

"A shock, physical or psychic, was enough to throw you off your mental balance."

And now, it seemed, any slight shock might "restore" me! "Restore!" "Damn!" would have been the better word! I fell into a fit of violent trembling at this awful thought.

True, my second self had never felt that there had been something else before its strange birth when I was thirty-one. But now, excited, I gave full credence to what Dr. Prince had told me about Heinrich Meyer. Now, I knew what had haunted me so long. I knew who had beckoned to me. It was he—the dead man—Heinrich Meyer. He was summoning me to go with him, back into the past. He threatened me. It was as if he were saying:

"Wait! There'll be a shock. Everything will go—Bang! You'll be back in Cleveland, making furniture, going to labor meetings, drinking beer with the boys!"

Of course, this process in my mind was not as simple as it appears from these words. My brain was often dark with terror, yet the Heinrich Meyer I feared was after all the Heinrich Meyer of Dr. Prince's accounts. He was not part of me. My spirit refused to believe in him.

Yet Dr. Prince had convinced me that I was a victim of amnesia and aphasia, and had I not just read that another such victim had been "restored" by a sudden shock?

I DID not want to be "restored." I wanted to remain the successful citizen of San Bernardino. I wanted to become Madeline's husband. From all that Dr. Prince had managed to tell me about him, I thought of Heinrich Meyer as a rather gross fellow. And here was I, with fine sensibilities, climbing rapidly up the social ladder.

I now lived in daily terror of being shocked. I feared noise, I feared to use my eyes, lest I see something that would unnerve me. I grew thin and pale. I felt I was being pulled out of life—out of my new, my better life. Might not the least shock plunge me back into what wo - be worse than death? I had died and had been born again.

And now, might I not die again, when I most wanted to live?

As the day for my marriage to Madeline

approached, my mood lightened. I could see nothing but the glorious future once we were married.

"What nonsense!" I said to myself. "Shocks! I'll just keep my head about me. I'll let nothing shock me. I'll simply expect anything, and then nothing will be amazing."

Fortified by this resolve, I married Madeline.

My worldly goods and my happiness increased. In the cheerful influence of my home, where Madeline's smiling face now greeted me at all times, all my peace of mind was restored. Heinrich Meyer no longer appeared at my shoulder. Poor fellow! I had usurped his place completely.

THE rest of the James Matthews' story appears briefly in a private report by Dr. Walter Franklin Prince. He writes:

I was in my office when I received a visit from the wife of one of my closest friends, James Matthews. Because of circumstances which I need not relate here, I felt for James an affection like that of a brother; or, I might more truthfully say, a father for a son.

For that reason, and also because I had grown very fond of her, too, I sprang from my chair in great concern when I saw that Madeline Matthews was deathly pale, with tears streaming down her cheeks, and in a condition bordering on hysteria.

It was a long time before I was able to quiet her sufficiently so she could give me a coherent account of what had happened. Here are the strange facts she told me. I remember her words vividly.

"James came home early from the office today. When he arrived, I was out, shopping, and he sat down in the library. I thought I'd surprise him, so I tiptoed up behind him, close to his chair, and then threw into his lap something I'd bought for him—a new fountain pen, because he'd said he needed one. He was reading a newspaper, and the pen hit it sharply. He made a funny little jump in the chair, and so I laughed.

"Then, when he sat there perfectly still, drawing his hand over his eyes, I said:

"'James, what's the matter? Did I frighten you?'

"He looked at me. And in an agonizing moment I realized he didn't know me—he didn't recognize his own wife!"

At these words a chill hit my spine. Madeline broke down again and wept. I steadied my nerves, then quieted her once more.

"Can you go on?" I asked.

Her words stumbled as she resumed.

"He stared at me, with unseeing eyes. Then he got up like an old man. He looked all around the room as if he'd never seen it before. When he spoke I could hardly recognize his voice.

"'Well, madam,' he said, 'what kind of furniture do you desire? I could make you a very fine cabinet. I make everything by hand. Something in walnut? Tell me the style you want. Something to go in this room?' Then he asked, 'What is the trouble, madam? I see you are crying.'

"HE asked me why I was crying!

"'James,' I said to him, 'don't you know me? James!'

"He shook his head, doctor. He just shook his head!

"'You have some trouble,' he said. 'I'm sorry. I guess I better come back another time. Good-day, madam. I will make you a very fine cabinet, when you are ready.'

"He went away. He left me. He walked straight out of the house—"

I do not wish to prolong this terrible narrative. There was much I would have to explain later to that wretched woman. Some time afterwards, I made inquiries, and learned from a friend in Cleveland, Ohio, that after an absence of many years, a cabinet-maker by the name of Heinrich Meyer had reappeared. He is established there in his trade and is actively interested in labor union affairs.

Through influence, I managed to have Madeline Matthews retain possession of large real estate holdings in San Bernardino.

From time to time I hear of this Heinrich Meyer, the man who died and was reborn, and who will now never know how dear a friend James Matthews had become to me.

Cursed By a Voodoo King

(*Continued from page* 62)

the worries of his servants troubled him not at all.

But the woman's hysteria affected me deeply. I had Pedro saddle my horse at once. I snatched a lighted lantern, and galloped all the way to Joseph's hut. No answer came to my hail. I walked cautiously into the hut. There was a disagreeable odor, and on the table I noticed the remains of several dead bats—the leathery wings were strewn about the place. There was a long box in the corner, somewhat like the plainest type of undertaker's box, but much longer. Holes were cut into the soft wood, and there was a creepy rustling inside.

I left the hut with a shuddering spine, and looked around through the darkness. But I failed to find any trace of the hut's strange tenant. Then on the bank of the nearly dried-up stream nearby, I saw the print of a large bare foot. The impression of the toes pointed southward, and mounting my horse I rode in that direction. By shielding the rays of the lantern, I could make out a faint glow in a little woods further to the south, and as my mount galloped on, the glow became brighter.

Dismounting at the edge of the wood, I drew my revolver and proceeded cautiously toward the light. I finally found myself on the edge of a little clearing. But my approach must have been heard, for I could detect the sound of scurrying feet, and as I stepped into the clearing, vague black forms disappeared in the under-

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brush. Then I heard more running and the crackling of twigs. I had surprised a clandestine gathering of some sort, and had frightened away the more timid.

But one form did not flee. The colossal Joseph, nude except for a loin-cloth, stood in the light of a flaming torch, the rays of which sent reptilian glints gliding about his oily skin. Next to him was a long box similar to the one I had seen in his hut. The baby of Josefina was in his arms. And, much to my surprise, Joseph appeared quite calm. He greeted me respectfully.

I gripped my revolver in my right hand, and spoke up challengingly, although, I admit it now, I knew fear.

"Joseph," I said, sternly. "I must have that child, or I shall shoot. Do you understand? Shoot! Shoot you dead!"

THERE was no fright in Joseph's muddy eyes, but he immediately passed the sleeping child to me.

"What do you and your companions here?" I demanded. "What were you up to?"

"I took the child that she might stroke the smooth skin of my friend," replied Joseph, motioning toward the long box. "It is good for little ones to do thus—it makes the good luck, and never after that will a child fear the friendly beasts of the woods that walk or fly or crawl. It is a custom of my country, Master."

"You will not do such a thing again, Joseph," I commanded. "Never touch a hand to this child again!"

A long, low hiss could be heard through the holes in the shallow box. I wondered what kind of reptile was in there. Was it a harmless *maja,* or possibly some great boa? For rumor credited Joseph with having serpents from other lands. Prosper had told me that his enemy, the "devil-man," had boasted that he kept specimens of the deadly *fer-de-lance* in his hut; that he had carried the snakes from Martinique, to which they were native. There had been no proof of this, for no one cared to search the hut under these conditions.

A reaction set my teeth chattering as I rode back through the warm night, Josefina's child in my arms. I was still undecided as to whether I had interrupted voodoo rites or whether Joseph was telling the truth. Logic made me half believe the latter, for if Joseph had meant harm to the child, he must have little fear of consequences and, accordingly, would have attacked me and killed me also. At any rate, I took the child to its grateful mother, who crooned and sobbed—and left the plantation that very night, with a smal amount of wages due her.

As the days went on, I had to admit that the "devil-man" was at least an excellent worker. He became more tractable, and labored steadily and tirelessly through the hot days, snicking the cane with his machete and piling it on his cart and bringing it to me to be weighed and credited. We boarded and housed the help, whose wants were few and, accordingly, we paid off only once a month. Yet some system was necessary to keep track of the cane cut by each field-hand. These amounts varied. Some of the workmen were slow and lazy, and others, like Joseph, full of energy and apparently tireless.

For this we had the system of giving them *vales de cana.* These *vales de cana* were little slips on which I credited, with indelible pencil, so many *arrobas* of cane after I weighed it. An *arroba* is a little over twenty-five pounds. The laborers held these tallies to the end of the month. Then my employer, Don Esteban, cashed them. Such an occasion was about the only one where he would deign to traffic with the laborers at all. His attitude was contemptuous toward them, and he had a special dislike for Joseph.

"The man is filthy," he complained to me one day. "See that he washes his clothes—this very evening. I shall be cashing the *vales de cana* tomorrow, and this brute should be taught more respect. He must appear before me in clean clothes."

I told Joseph. He grinned and shook his head, and that night I went to his hut to see if he had followed instructions. I found Joseph squatting on the bank of the little stream that ran into the swamp near his abode. He was rubbing and rinsing his spotted white shirt in the none-too-clean waters, which were shallow and yellowish due to the long drought which had dried up most of the streams.

Joseph took little notice of me as I rode up. I saw a smudge of something that looked like indigo in the water—what is called bluing, I believe, here in the North.

"What is that? Are you using indigo, Joseph?" I asked, pleasantly. "You mean to get the clothes good and white, eh?"

Joseph looked up, apparently not understanding. Again I pointed to the indigo stain. Joseph put his hand in the pocket of his shirt—the shirt that had been rubbed and soaked in the water.

"Money," he said, laconically.

He brought out his *vales de cana* slips. They were in a smudged, pulpy mass.

"WHY, you have made these worthless, Joseph!" I said.

"They are money," he replied. "Tomorrow I shall turn them into cash. But not to get drunk, me. I shall save my money and shall buy poultry for my friends."

Once before I had seen Joseph buying poultry from the dealers as they rode by the plantation on horseback, carrying live fowls head downwards from the pommels of their saddles. I knew that Joseph must have been feeding these delicacies to his weird "friends," while he himself subsisted on fruits, beans and rice, and the very little beef that Don Esteban provided for his help.

Laborers were given only two meals a day, unless one counted the early morning ration of a glass of aguardiente and a cigarette. Don Esteban had forbidden smoking about the cane-fields. It was an extreme precaution, but the intense drought had made the cane exceptionally dry, and Don Esteban was afraid of losing even one stalk by fire. I thought of his niggardliness, and of the opportunity he would have on the morrow to withhold Joseph's money, since Joseph's *vales de cana* slips were undecipherable.

Next day at the appointed hour, Don Esteban started to dole out the small amounts of money as the slips were given in, and I put down the totals on a sheet of paper. When Joseph's turn came it was as I had thought. Don Esteban refused to allow anything on the slips that he could not read.

At first Joseph did not understand. Then the true significance of the Don's imperious gesture as he waved him away slowly percolated through Joseph's strange brain. His body grew tense. His muddy eyes smoldered. I was glad at that moment that his machete was not at hand.

I braved Don Esteban's ire in pleading with him to make some settlement. I feared that the big brute before me might take some terrible measure of reprisal since his month's labor had been for naught. The haughty Don Esteban was adamant.

Later that day, Don Esteban summoned me. "Get rid of that laborer called Joseph," he commanded. His thin nostrils were quivering with rage, expanding and contracting like the gills of a fish. "One hears that this baboon has threatened to work some sorcery that my cane-fields may be destroyed. Perhaps he means to incite his followers to fire the cane."

"BUT that would be impossible, *Señor,*" I protested. "Our hands are docile. And no man could start a fire that could not readily be put out."

"That is true," he admitted, "but see that this unwholesome brute is dismissed at once."

On the way to discharge Joseph, I passed the *barracons* where nearly all the field-help was sheltered. Work for the day had been finished, and all were eating and talking noisily. It was plain that no one here had been in touch with the devil-man if he planned any mischief. But as I rode by, Prosper ran out and doffed his hat.

"Master," he said, "the devil-man is working an evil spell. He is already working his black magic and calling upon the voodoo devil-gods to bring ruin upon the plantation and us all."

"What has he said?" I asked.

"He has said but little. He did but stretch his hands over the cane-fields and murmur evil words. And he said he would wave his hands and the sun-gods would breathe hot upon the fields and destroy them by flame."

"He is but cackling like a hen, Prosper," I said. "You have good sight, Prosper. See! Is not that Joseph standing there before his hut?"

Prosper, who had unusual keenness of vision, peered through the dusk, which would be followed in an incredibly short time by the swift tropic night.

"It is indeed the devil-man!" he cried. "He stands there, moving his unholy hands strangely in the darkness. He is working the evil spell, Master!"

I smiled to myself, glad that I had located Joseph, and glad to see that he had made no effort to incite his followers to any mischief. As for any evil spells or incantations or other supernatural matters that the superstitious Prosper feared, I had no fear of them. I started to ride on toward the hut. But suddenly one of the native Cuban toilers ran from back of the *barracon* and waved his arms in front of me.

"Fuego!" he shrieked. "See. The cane is afire!"

It seemed incredible. But a tongue of flame shot up from a corner of the cane-field, and then another tongue nearby, and still another, many rods away. It was as if bolts of lightning were striking about the great dry field. As the fire spread, I

could see the huge form of Joseph in its light, dancing and shouting in demoniac glee before his hut. Was this strange savage indeed a devil-man? Had he worked some evil spell by some sorcery handed down in tribal succession from African jungle-folk? Surely, this fire had been set by no human hand. That much I knew.

Now the cane-field was becoming a great sheet of fire. The cane, fed by its own oil, shot up flamingly like a rocket first here, then there. A wail came from the laborers in the *barracons*. Dark, half-dressed figures flew madly up the road, shouting with terror. In the now well lighted roadway I saw Prosper on his knees, crossing himself and his face turned pleadingly toward the sky, now luminous with the flare of the flames. A breeze from the south, slanting the flame toward me, drove along a black pall of smoke. Rows of flame roared on, widening as they rushed through the dry cane. They melted into other flaming rows and seemed to merge into one great furnace. The heat was inconceivable. Through it all came the sinister crackling roar and the strident shouts of running blacks.

I HEARD hoof-beats behind me. Don Esteban dashed up on his great white horse.

"Good God!" he yelled. "Good God! It springs up in a hundred places. The whole plantation will be destroyed. Is there no way? Can you not whip these field-brutes together? A back-fire would—!"

He turned his horse again and was galloping frantically and aimlessly back where he had come from. He must have had the terror of a feeling of utter futility. I urged my horse southward, but I too knew that nothing could be done except to save some of the natives from the nearby huts, the dry thatches of which already were smoldering.

We had little or no equipment for fighting such things as this. Even the fire department of a great metropolis could not cope with it. It was a case where there was nothing at all to do but try to save human life.

My horse shied, and then nearly slid from under me in terror. He snorted and danced and giddied about as a thin streak of fire seemed to detach itself from the burning cane-field and make for his feet. It was exactly as if some fiery serpent had glided out from that field of flame!

Then there was a writhing in the road—evolutions like the pinwheels that the Chinese coolies sometimes used. With my hair almost standing up on my head, I dismounted for a closer look at this uncanny thing. My horse turned tail and galloped madly up the road.

What I saw took some of the uncanny fear out of me. A *jubo*, a black snake a little over three feet long, writhed and twisted and weaved there in the road as flames bit into its scaly hide. I brought my heavy boot down on its head and crushed it. Then, despite my distaste for reptiles, I examined the thing closely.

It seemed at first the longest *jubo* I have ever seen. But in a moment I discovered that all of the flaming length was not the snake's body alone. A thong of leather had been tied behind the serpent's middle, and attached to several parts of the thong were flaming pieces of oiled rags or fuses.

The idea came to me swiftly. Joseph had tied fuses or oiled rags to leather thongs, looped them over several *jubos*, and set the reptiles free to glide and writhe through the dry cane-field.

I heard a blood-curdling shout back of me. I turned. There in the glow of the burning cane, I saw the massive form of the devil-man. He carried a leathern bag in his hand, and in the muddy blue-gray eyes was an insane light. In a moment he was upon me, and had wrenched my revolver from its holster.

Ever since a field-hand had overpowered an overseer and taken his holster-gun and abused him, I had carried a small French pistol in a groove along my right boot, for use in an emergency. I tried to appear calm as I reached down for it. But the devil-man must have divined my intention. He picked me up as one would pick up a baby. With me in one arm and the leathern bag in the other, he raced wildly south toward the swamp.

AT the other side of the swamp was a deserted hut. At least it had been deserted the last time I had seen it. It was too far away from the cane-fields for use in our housing plans. But now I saw that Joseph had clandestinely moved his effects into it. A lighted lantern sat on the table, its rays shining on a crude wooden idol which he must have carved himself and stained with berry-juice. In a corner were two of the long wooden boxes, with the holes bored through them. In a moment Joseph had tied me up securely with pieces of leather thong of the sort I had seen bound about the *jubo*.

He set me down on the floor, and impaled me with those bizarre, maniacal eyes.

"You are the chieftain of him who cheats

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and steals," he said, in his odd French *patois.* "You come to violate the religious rites in the forest. You shall suffer. You doubt the voodoo power. I shall show you."

With a superhuman effort I found my voice, and tried to keep the tremolo from it.

"I SHALL punish you, Joseph," I said, as I might speak to an unruly child on some inconsequential occasion. "You have also cheated—you have deceived the ignorant natives. But my gods tell me that you have taken the *jubos,* and tied leather things to their tails, and attached oiled rags to them and freed them to spread fire through the cane-fields. My gods have told me that, Joseph!"

Joseph's body stiffened. He seemed uncertain of himself. Then his eyes narrowed.

"If you have power," he said, "you may then prove that power. You shall hold the *fer-de-lance,* and speak with it, and make it do your will and not harm you. The great snake-god is angry. It is true that twelve *jubos* had to be destroyed to bring ruin upon the great oppressor. All snakes are now angry. You will perhaps calm them."

He started to untie the thong about the mouth of the leather bag.

"Me, I have been in Martinique," he said. "The *fer-de-lance,* who spreads death to evil-doers, he too is my friend. I bring him here from Martinique, bring him in my pocket. He shall make friends with you if you are not evil. But if you are evil, he will strike you with death."

He put his hand into the leathern bag. He drew out a wriggling thing or two and put them back. Then his hand came out again, and I felt my senses swimming. His thumb and forefinger were about the neck of the deadliest of all poisonous reptiles—the *fer-de-lance.* I recognized that flat, triangular head. One bite from this terrible scourge, and the victim would die after suffering the pains of hell.

From my dry throat I could hear sounds coming, sounds which formed words, although the tone of my horror-stricken voice was strange even to myself. I was attempting what the *Americanos* call the bluff.

"I have not treated you unkindly, Joseph," I said. "I too shall make friends with the snakes. But how can I stroke my friends while I am thus tied? Unbind me. You are more powerful than I. Should I try to escape, you can crush me as one would crush an insect. I shall show you my power. I shall stroke the snake, and speak with it, and calm its anger."

My heart almost stopped as Joseph appeared to consider the matter. That small French pistol was still safely in the groove of my boot.

"You will handle the snake—*this* snake?" asked Joseph, as he cannily held the enraged reptile just back of the neck. Its tail writhed madly about his great wrist, and its forked tongue darted out and in.

"I will," I replied. "But you must unbind me."

"We shall see if you have the power," was Joseph's decision. He put down the snake gingerly. It reared its ugly head, struck at the thick leather side of my boot, and crawled towards a corner where it lay coiled, its horrid head raised half a foot, its baleful little eyes glittering like jewels.

JOSEPH spurned using a knife to cut the thongs. He leaned over me, and with his great strength broke the leather as a storm-tossed vessel would snap a puny hawser. Then, watching me cautiously, he started for the corner, snatched quickly at the *fer-de-lance,* and once more held it with his thumb and forefinger about the neck.

In an instant I was on my feet, the French pistol in my hand, pointed at Joseph's heart.

"Stop!" I shouted. "Stop! I shall shoot you through the heart!"

I started to back slowly and cautiously towards the door of the hut. My foot stepped on something which writhed and hissed beneath me and made my blood run cold and the great beads of sweat leap out on my brow. But I dared not look down. I could only hope that this devil-man—and indeed he was proving one to me—had only one *fer-de-lance,* and that the creature I had stepped on was harmless.

Now Joseph edged forward as he watched me with hate in those weird, bluish-gray eyes. It was not mercy which kept me from pulling the trigger of my firearm. If I tried, and it hung fire, for it had not been used in some time, I was lost. And it even ran through my mind that one of these small-caliber bullets might be insufficient to stop this terrible mammoth creature.

I EDGED backward, my whole body trembling. But I kept the pistol pointed steadily.

And then I saw the flat, triangular head of the reptile slowly lengthen itself and saw its body stretch elastically. Then that wedge-like head struck at the man who held it, and Joseph recoiled in terror. I took advantage of the chance to throw myself through the door. As I did so, a hissing something hurtled by my head, and hit the ground a few feet in front of me.

I ran madly through the swamp, up along the road that flanked the still burning cane. Weak and spent, I reached my quarters and fell into the arms of Pedro, my servant. I could hear myself babbling something, but I could not make out the words.

Joseph, I am told, was found in the hut next day, his eyes rolled back in his dead face, which was contorted with the effects of terrible pain. Prosper and many of the natives insisted that the devil had become jealous of his work and had punished him.

When, a week later, I bade good-by to my ruined employer, the Haytians had departed, but many of the ignorant natives still spoke in whispers of the devil-man, who might at any time work his evil spells and reappear.

A broken man mentally and physically, I went to Santiago where my Conception nursed me back to health, and we were married in the cathedral at Santiago on the Plaza de la Reina.

The Amazing Case of Phineas P. Gage

(*Continued from page* 49)

of the peace of Cavendish.

The people of the little town were no longer frightened by the frequent roars that sent startled echoes crashing through the hills. They knew that it was only Phineas and his men, blasting a new path to progress.

On a certain fall afternoon—it was September 13th, strangely enough—the Indian summer sun gazed with a warm fondness upon the busy figures below. Phineas looked at his watch. It was 4:30. They would never get done with the blasting unless they hurried. The holes had already been bored. The dynamite was placed in position. His workmen were tamping, before pouring the sand into the holes.

Phineas, hurrying about, prompting his sweating workers, noticed that one of the charges of dynamite had not been tamped down. Seizing a tamping iron (a crowbar 3 feet 7 inches long, 1 1-4 inches in diameter, narrowing to a point, and weighing 13 pounds), he walked over to the neglected charge, and started to prepare the blast.

Something to his right caught his attention. As he turned his head in that direction, to see what it was, the charge exploded!

There was a terrific roar. The tamping iron shot out of the hole, pierced his head above the left jaw-bone, passed up behind his left eye, burst through his brain, and broke through the middle forward part of his skull. The bar flew on through the air, and fell 40 feet away.

Phineas Gage dropped like a dead man. Stunned by the unexpected explosion, shocked motionless by what they had seen, his gang stood frozen in their tracks. Before they had recovered sufficiently to move toward what they believed to be Phineas' corpse, they were startled to see *the supposedly dead man slowly sitting up!*

His men suddenly came to life. They helped him to his feet. With their assistance, he walked a short distance to a nearby ox-cart, and, sitting up, was driven the three-quarters of a mile to the hotel in the village where he lived.

He was put to bed and the doctor was summoned. Later, at the request of the doctor in charge, the hotel-keeper, Joseph Adams, made the following affidavit:

> "This is to certify that P. P. Gage had boarded in my house for several weeks previous to his being injured upon the railroad, and that I saw him and conversed with him soon after the accident, and am of the opinion that he was perfectly conscious of what was

passing around him. He rode to the house, three-quarters of a mile, sitting in a cart, and walked from the cart into the piazza, and thence upstairs with but little assistance. I noticed the state of the left eye and know from experiment, that he could see with it for several days, though not distinctly. . . .

"The morning subsequent to the accident, I went in quest of the bar, and found it at a smith's shop, near the pit in which he was engaged.

"The men in the pit asserted that they found the iron, covered with blood and brains, several rods behind where Mr. Gage stood, and that they washed it in the brook, and returned it with the other tools; which representation was fully corroborated by the greasy feel and look of the iron, and the *fragments* of *brain* which I SAW" (The italics and capitals are Mr. Adams') "upon the rock where it fell.

"(Signed) JOSEPH ADAMS
"Justice of the Peace.
"Cavendish 12/14/1848."

This document did not seem to satisfy the skeptics of the medical profession. Almost a year later, when Gage had not yet been presented for their inspection at a regular meeting of the Medical Association, the Rev. Joseph Freeman of Cavendish wrote a letter to Dr. J. M. Harlow.

"Cavendish, Dec. 5, 1849.
"Dr. J. M. Harlow,
"Dear Sir,

"I was at home on the day Mr. Gage was hurt . . . I found him in a cart, sitting up without aid, with his back against the foreboard. When we reached his quarters, he rose to his feet without aid, and walked quick, though with an unsteady step, to the hind end of the cart, when two of his men came forward and aided him out, and walked with him, supporting him to the house.

"Soon after this I went to the place where the accident happened. I found upon the rocks where I supposed he had fallen, a small quantity of brains . . . .

"The *appearance* of the iron corresponded with the story. It had a greasy appearance and was so to the touch. . . .

"I think of nothing further relating to this affair which cannot be more minutely stated by others.

"Very respectfully yours,
"(signed) JOSEPH FREEMAN"

Doctors read the affidavit and letter with but little belief in their truth. After all, recorded medical history had no similar happening listed. A man has his skull and brain pierced through by an iron bar and, with absolute consciousness, walks and rides to his home? It was still unbelievable.

But the man who lived on for 13 years after his accident, had managed to climb the stairs to his room a few minutes after it happened. He was not delirious, and seemed to be in no pain. The doctor who was called in found his pulse beat 60 (somewhat lower than normal) but it was regular and strong.

At ten o'clock that night, the physician issued a bulletin:

"The dressings are saturated with blood, but the hemorrhage appears to be abating. Has vomited twice only since being dressed. Sensorial powers remain as yet unimpaired. Says he does not wish to see his friends, as he shall be at work in a day or two. Tell where they live, their names, etc. Pulse 65, constant agitation of the lower extremities."

Six hours after an experience that would have killed most other men, Gage still believed "he would be at work in a day or two"!

The next day's bulletin showed a change for the worse:

September 14th, 7 A. M.
"Has slept some; appears to be in pain, speaks with difficulty; tumefaction of face considerable, and increasing; pulse 70; knows his friends, and is rational. Asks who is foreman in his pit. Hemorrhage internally continues slightly. Has not vomited since 12 M."

The bulletins of the month that followed revealed the desperate struggle for life which Gage made despite the pain and delirium.

September 19th, 8 P. M.
"Has been very restless during the day; skin hot and dry; tongue red; excessive thirst; delirious, talking incoherently with himself, and directing his men."

September 20 and 21
"Has remained much the same."

Early in October, the remarkable vitality of Phineas Gage pulled him through the crisis and set him on the road to recovery.

October 7
"Has succceeded in raising himself up, and took one step to his chair, and sat about five minutes."

October 20
"Improving. Gets out and into bed with but little assistance. Sits up thirty minutes twice in twenty-four hours. Is very childish; wishes to go home to Lebanon, New Hampshire. The wound in the scalp is healing rapidly."

November 17
"Improving. Expresses himself as feeling better in every respect; has no pain in the head."

Four months after his accident, in January, 1849, Phineas Gage was pronounced cured. But he was not the same man. The quiet, self-possessed young foreman was gone. Bearing his name was an older, weaker, more childish person, unfit for manual labor, who looked upon the world with the curiosity of a new-born baby.

One interest dominated his mind. That was his own case. He had become conscious of this when presented before the

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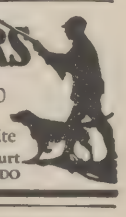

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Medical Association for examination, and had noticed the tremendous sensation he had caused. He remembered the eagerness of their questions, and the way they had touched the newly healed hole in his head. Somehow, he decided that the best way for him to earn a living was to display himself to the curious public.

He went to Boston and joined a freak-show. Here, he exposed his head to the gaze of the curious, and showed them the iron bar which had pierced it.

Unfortunately, the public, which could not examine him in the scientific manner of the doctors, refused to believe his story. The cry "Fake, Fake," rang in his ears for many years afterward.

After three years of such humiliation, Gage had to give up his exhibitions, and took to cab-driving. He had acquired a fondness for horses, and enjoyed working with them. He gave the iron bar to the doctor who had helped him back to life (who later presented it to the Warren Anatomical Museum of the Harvard Medical School), and drifted west to California, where he drove a stage-coach, and led a healthy outdoor life.

Then he wandered to Chile, where his experiences were never recorded. But ten years after he left Boston, Gage had returned to California, a very sick man. He had begun to suffer occasional fits. These grew more severe as they became more frequent, and finally, on May 21, 1861, he died, almost 13 years after the accident that had made him the talk of the medical world.

At this time, the East had not known of his death, but years later, a graduate of the Harvard Medical School discovered his death and his place of burial. Knowing the interest in this most amazing case in medical history, he obtained permission to exhume the body, and Gage's skull was brought back and exhibited with the bar which had pierced it.

Today the skull leers out of a glass case in the Warren Anatomical Museum. Beside it rests the tamping iron. A life-mask of Gage, showing the scar in the scalp, and the projecting bits of bone under it, surveys its rivals for the interest of the skeptic. Visitors have the privilege of carefully examining and handling at leisure a reconstructed skull, with the break in the bone carefully imitated.

The Love that Lost a Throne

[(*Continued from page* 39)

harder to conceal. When the eyes glisten with joy and the face radiates contentment, and the blood pounds madly, one longs to speak of this great happiness, to share it with others, to spread its brilliancy over the whole world.

Whatever stories have been told, printed, whispered or implied about the first meeting between Rudolph and Mary, only one is a true tale, that which I shall here record. The Crown Prince had no reason whatsoever to deceive me. My trust had been proven too often, and in our own relationship only the truth passed between us.

IT was Mary who talked without discretion, and she, poor child, sacrificed her life for it. Though often I feel certain that even had she guarded her secret as closely as he did, nevertheless the end would have been the same.

Mary was young, only eighteen, unschooled in the ways of court intrigue, and too amazed by this new adventure of love to realize the importance of utter secrecy. The miracle of loving the Crown Prince and being loved in return was so bewildering that the young baroness lost her sense of proportion.

His Highness did not meet Mary at the home of a certain Countess whose name I shall not mention. That lady was a relation to the royal family, and is still alive, and I believe she has suffered enough in this whole matter through no fault of her own True, she figured in the affair at a later date, and was banished from Vienna, but I have always been convinced she was not malicious but merely a catspaw of fate.

On a day in September in 1888, a note in a feminine handwriting was delivered personally to Rudolph. I was with him at the time, for we had just returned from Godollo, the royal hunting box in Hungary where there had been a large family party, very boresome to Rudolph.

His eyes sparkled as he read the message, and his mouth twitched so contagiously I was ready to laugh before he handed me the note. During the few seconds it took me to scan the small piece of paper, I noticed from the corner of my eye that he had crossed his legs and having clasped his hands about one knee, he was rocking back and forth and staring into space with a dreamy, irresistible smile.

Instantly I felt a certain sense of responsibility for him.

The note was from a woman who said she had long loved His Highness from afar, and now wished to tell him personally of her feelings. Would he not grant her an interview, so that she might once know the joy of talking to him?

The letter was unsigned, but the writer said that he might send his answer in care of General Delivery to a certain postoffice in Vienna.

There was something here different from the usual amorous notes sent to the Crown Prince. Experienced women of the world who wrote him were not quite so frank as this. Usually their meeting was veiled by elegant and dignified expressions.

This girl was young, I felt sure. Perhaps only a schoolgirl. Her expression of affection was too open to have come from a sophisticated woman. There was a buoyancy about her way of putting things, a charming freshness which proclaimed her youth.

"We'll do it, Hugo," he cried.

"Do what, Your Highness?" I parried.

"Follow this thing through, of course!" he chuckled.

"Do you think it is safe, Your Highness?" I protested.

"SAFE? Safe?" he teased. "I am tired of safety."

"But you do not know who she is," I reminded him. "Suppose it is a trap."

He laughed and slapped his thigh. "That is just why I think she must be a very young girl. For these other women are proud to sign their names to such documents. It offers intrigue, adventure, and who knows?" Here he sobered, and tense longing crystallized in his eyes. "Perhaps I shall find my true love after all. There is still a chance. I am only thirty, Hugo."

His voice almost pleaded with me, as if I had authority to stop him or grant his permission.

"I have a plan, Hugo. You stand by my chair while I write. And you shall come along, so that if things *are* irregular—"

I do not remember the wording of the note itself. The directions it contained however, are very clear in my mind.

He told the anonymous sender of the note that he would be delighted to talk to her. If it was possible for her to elude her elders some night that week at midnight, she was to go to a certain street where for one hour there would be stationed a *fiacre*—a cab. The cab would be there every night in the week; in case she were unable to get out one evening, she could be sure to keep her rendezvous.

She was merely to step into the cab, say the word "Dolphin" and then the driver would take her to the place where she might meet the Crown Prince.

Rudolph's personal coachman was delegated for the mission, a man by the name of Bratfisch who was devoted to his master.

HIS Royal Highness was as excited as if he were already in love, and his mood was communicated to me.

"This is the way we shall arrange," Rudolph went on, when a servant had been dispatched with his answer. "Each night you must reserve a private dining-room in a different restaurant, and tell Bratfisch of the changes, so he may know to which place he is to drive the lady should she appear. Then each night we shall go to the restaurant at midnight and wait until one-thirty."

He thought he would wear a lieutenant's uniform like mine, so we would not be conspicuous. He wanted to wait where he might see the lady first yet not be seen.

"And then," he finished, "if there is neither physical nor spiritual nor intellectual beauty in her face, I shall disappear. You will meet her in the private dining-room, make apologies to her for my inability to be present, and explain some imaginary circumstances which demanded my attention elsewhere."

On the third night after he sent his answer, as we were waiting in an alcove near the door of one of the less known restaurants, I beheld, from the window, Bratfisch, the coachman, climbing down from the cab. He opened the doors, helped out a female figure, closely muffled in a cloak, and escorted her to the restaurant. In the anteroom I met them, and recognized Mary Vetsera.

I had never been introduced to her. Indeed she had not yet made her bow to society having only recently returned from a trip to Egypt. She was but eighteen, I knew, but her beauty had been talked of even when she was a little girl.

Rudolph gave me no time to think. I had just about stepped up to her when he emerged from the alcove and, brushing me aside, bowed before her.

For a moment I forgot my mission and forgot the Crown Prince, being completely overwhelmed myself by the dazzling beauty of this young creature. True, I had seen her before, but only at a distance as she drove in the Prater, or in a group of young girls.

I noticed first her small hands and feet, and her seductive gait, a swaying stride that was irresistible, as we walked toward the private dining-room.

She was of medium height, supple, yet rounded and developed for her age. Against the smooth, velvety whiteness of her skin, her red, voluptuous mouth was startling, and her lips were parted ever so slightly over sharp little white teeth. And I think that in all the courts of Europe I had never seen such handsome eyes as she possessed—deep blue with curling lashes set off by finely marked eyebrows. Their depth was not only in the color, but in the expression as well. A wealth of understanding, of sympathy, was imprisoned in those eyes, yet what flashed more obviously from them was an alluring manner which the Prince felt immediately.

Something arch yet artless scintillated in her manner—some instinct of coquetry.

From the instant he stepped out behind me, Rudolph was enamored of her, as was any man who fell under the spell of her eyes. The two figures disappeared into the reserved room, whereupon I instructed the head waiter himself to serve him and to keep ultra silence about the affair.

Perhaps it was only an hour, perhaps two before they reappeared, but obviously the Crown Prince was a transformed person. His eyes shone with joy and rapture, as he stooped deferentially to her smaller figure.

Then he noticed me, and upon their approach I straightened in an attitude of salute. There was a hint of gratitude and a note of tenderness in his voice as he murmured to me, and perhaps for the ears of his young beloved:

"Hugo the ever faithful," he smiled, patting my shoulder.

He turned to the girl. "Mary," he began, dreamily regarding her animated face, "this man is officially my attendant. Actually he is my brother."

I felt myself blushing when two deep blue, sparkling eyes scanned my face.

She extended her tiny hand for me to kiss, and bending low, I complied with her wish.

She smiled mischievously at Rudolph. "Your Royal Highness, I must go now. I must go."

He pressed his lips to her little fingers. I offered my arm since I was to escort her to the waiting *fiacre* but she did not look at me. She tilted her head backward, her eyes fairly caressing the Prince.

Abruptly she dropped my arm, wheeled with a great rustling of skirts, and the ostrich feathers on her hat brushed my face. Then rushing swiftly to Rudolph she flung her arms about his neck, and kissed him on the mouth, disregarding my presence.

Returning to me she sighed, her lips still parted over her small teeth, whereupon I escorted her to the cab on which Bratfisch the coachman still sat waiting.

This was the first meeting between Archduke Rudolph, Crown Prince of Austria, and the Baroness Mary Vetsera.

Rudolph and I sat through the whole night talking in his private apartment at the Hofburg. I was not blind to the fact that I was an accomplice in a situation which might be wrong and which was certainly dangerous. But I sensed in Rudolph's exultation that this was a tide which could not be turned backward.

For the first time in his life, the Crown Prince was in love, deeply, desperately, unselfishly.

"Nothing else matters, Hugo," he kept assuring me. "Wealth? The Crown? Position? They mean nothing. If Stephanie will grant me a divorce, and she should because there is nothing between us, I would marry Mary tomorrow."

"But Your Highness," I objected feebly. "It would be a morganatic marriage. Her family is not even received at Court. True, the Empress greets her in public—"

"What do such artificial standards matter? What do they mean?"

"But Your Highness, she would never be received even as your wife. You might have to renounce your throne."

He smiled impatiently. "Even so—" then stopping his reckless posing, his eyes pierced me with their direct gaze. "Not every man is destined to know true love. It comes as a rule once in a lifetime and when it does, everything else looks insignificant, infinitesimal beside it."

Later on I was criticized for not dis-

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closing to Emperor Francis Joseph the "affair" as they termed it in its early stages. To me, having witnessed the sincerity on both sides, their relationship was more than a regular intrigue. And it would have been the basest betrayal for me to play the spy and denounce two lovers whose only ambition was to make each other happy. Perhaps their only crime was that they loved too well.

It is not generally known that Rudolph and Mary met in his apartment in the Hofburg, for a time. Bratfisch and I were the only two people in the secret.

I began to know the Baroness Vetsera and to know her was to love her.

YOUNG as she was in years, she had the feminine instinct to do what was right, and yet as devoted as she was to Rudolph, there was an instability about her which made her more attractive.

She was absolutely devoted to her lover, and what I must emphasize mostly is that she was entirely indifferent to her opportunities for rising on the social ladder. But she was coquettish to her fingertips, flirted with me as well as Bratfisch, the coachman, and later with all the officers whom she met in Rudolph's company.

She really did not want to make it more difficult for him, yet this very instability prompted her to do strange things, imposed handicaps upon Rudolph and made enemies for him.

I do think that even then, at the beginning of their love, Mary, heedless girl that she was, had confided her secret to her friends. She was entirely too honest, too innocently ingenuous for her own good, and even told Rudolph much which worried him greatly.

"I had a terrible time with Stephanie," he told me one night on returning from Laxenburg.

"What is the trouble, Your Highness?" I asked.

"My friendship with Mary is known," he admitted.

I must have looked crestfallen, for worried as he was, he smiled. "It's not your fault, Hugo. Don't look as sad as if I blamed you. And Bratfisch is entirely above reproach."

"Ah, yes," I agreed.

"You see," pondered Rudolph, "Mary is the dearest thing in the world, but she is a child and talks too freely. My wife and parents have heard something about it."

"You mean—they know it is the Baroness?"

"They suspect," Rudolph replied. "If the dear child wouldn't talk so much! She has no sense of secrecy. For instance, during her trip to Egypt she met a young Englishman, and after a short acquaintance became betrothed to him."

This betrothal to the Englishman to whom I shall refer as Lord Greaves is of tremendous significance in this narrative. It is the only name in my story which is fictitious. I have no way of ascertaining if the man is still alive, or whether he left descendants who may suffer through my disclosure.

It happened that the Vetsera family approved of this betrothal, especially since Lord Greaves was a man of wealth and position and madly in love with Mary. She, on the other hand, confessed to Rudolph in her ingenuous, prattling way that she was not at all in love with her fiancé. Indeed she did not care for him in the least, and had consented to the match only out of boredom.

The next evening, I accompanied the Prince to the opera. That is, I was in his entourage. Stephanie had come into Vienna for a few of the season's activities. Her sister had come from Belgium for a visit, and I was merely one of the party which filled the royal box.

Word must have gone out that the Crown Prince and Princess were to grace the performance that night, for, as I held aside the scarlet velvet portière to permit Stephanie and Rudolph to enter their box, I saw that all the pride and beauty and aristocracy of Vienna had already gathered. Not a seat in a box was unoccupied.

There was Mary Vetsera in a box with the Countess, that cousin of Rudolph's who later was made to regret her friendship for Mary. This convinced me that she was Mary's confidante, and had been from the beginning.

The Countess' box was in full view of the royal box and Mary sat well to the front, so that the instant Stephanie or Rudolph should lift a lorgnette, they must see her.

She looked radiant. Her white crêpe-de-Chine dress was the last word in costly simplicity, and her lovely neck and arms gleamed like tinted marble against the hangings. A single diamond blazed in each ear, giving to her face a piquant, sophisticated expression which was most becoming. A crescent of diamonds sat upon her chestnut brown hair like a crown.

As Stephanie and her sister settled their royal trains about them and disposed of their fans and shawls and opera bags, Mary watched the Imperial Box closely, her eyes insolent with the daring of youth.

MY heart pounded when Rudolph raised his glasses, as was perfectly proper, to ascertain who was in the opposite boxes. It is an absolutely inflexible rule that at a public function, people wait for royalty to greet them. They do not greet royalty first. They only return greetings.

Of course Mary was in a position to know when the Prince's glasses swept her box, when they rested on her.

She sparkled. Her cheeks were flushed. Her tilted nose seemed more impudent than ever. Then, when she was certain that she was within the focus of his glasses, she broke the rule. In the presence of all Vienna, Mary Vetsera waved to Crown Prince Rudolph. She didn't bow, or incline her head. She waved her small jewelled hand, as one schoolgirl to another.

I saw Rudolph stiffen and grow pale. Never before this had they acknowledged each other in public. Polite but audible gasps rose from every quarter, but I think it was Stephanie's act which dictated Rudolph's. She lifted her lorgnette, and in a cold fury trained it on Mary. Whereupon, immediately, with a certain defiance, as if he had determined to have done with deceit, Rudolph bowed deeply to Mary.

Instantly the Minister of War in the box next to the Imperial one, set his monocle into his eye to stare at Mary. Nothing daunted, the invincible girl returned his stare, and then with gamin-like swiftness put out her dainty pink tongue at him.

By next morning Austria was agog with scandal. I had thought that Mary's unconscionable behavior would drive them apart. Instead, from that time on Rudolph acted like a man determined to pull the whole structure of his life down in ruins about him.

He realized Mary could not be tamed, could not be squeezed into the mold of court hypocrisy. And with her, he grew defiant. He took sides with her, condoned her pranks by neither censuring nor criticizing her.

More than that, he came out openly, tempted fate by meeting her publicly. He walked with her in the Prater, the fashionable promenade. They rode horseback together through the woods on the outskirts of Vienna. They had afternoon coffee and French bonbons in the fashionable cafés.

FEW people will perhaps understand the supreme affection, the humility and grandeur of a love which makes a man do what Rudolph did.

During this period Her Imperial Highness, Empress Elizabeth, sent Rudolph a message, begging him to come to see her at Schönbrunn, the winter palace. Rudolph tossed her note into the fire.

"I am not going to my mother," he said to me. "She wants to talk of Mary. She will side with Stephanie, and there is nothing to talk about. They must give me a divorce. My mother never cared what I did in boyhood. She shall not dictate my behavior now!"

He did not go. The affair in the Opera House had occurred in December, before Christmas. In January, the German Embassy gave a ball to which Mary's mother and her two daughters were invited.

The Baroness Helene Vetsera, her mother, was connected with diplomatic circles though not with the inner court society, and there was nothing at all unusual in this invitation.

Rudolph and Stephanie represented Their Imperial Majesties at the function, and here Mary delivered her next stroke.

As the royal pair advanced down the room, Rudolph greeted Mary by name. She swept him a courtesy, smiled, and in a low voice said merrily, "Your Royal Highness."

Perhaps Stephanie had decided to employ different tactics, for instantly she smiled in her slow way and also greeted Mary, calling her by name.

Like a flash, the foolish girl straightened, stiffened, and with her head high turned away from Stephanie.

She had snubbed royalty, even though this woman was her lover's wife! She had refused to return a royal acknowledgement!

Immediately a tempest broke loose in official circles in Vienna. Nothing else was spoken of that night or the next day. Naturally I was no party to the conversation between Rudolph and Stephanie, for whenever I went anywhere with them I followed in another carriage to insure their privacy.

His carriage led on for Schönbrunn, and so I realized he must have given the order after we set out. At the end of the twenty-mile drive, Rudolph gave me a signal to wait outside, while he went in with Stephanie.

I knew then he meant to reappear, and that he had decided to lead his own life

regardless of consequences.

That night is etched in my memory. I recall how it began to snow while I waited for the Crown Prince. I remember turning up the collar of my coat, for the snow was fine and hard, and the wind drove it down my neck and battered the grains against my face.

Once after I lowered my head to light a cigarette, I looked up to find a tall figure emerging out of the night, striding toward me.

"Lieutenant Hugo Leibnitz?" the man asked brusquely, approaching so closely he almost collided with me.

I bowed. "With whom have I the pleasure—?"

"I am Lord Greaves," he said, and I noticed his German had a foreign twang, but I recognized the name.

He was the betrothed of Mary Vetsera.

"You are the confidant of the Crown Prince," he told me. "I want to see His Highness tonight, right away. You are in a position to arrange it."

"You cannot see His Royal Highness," I announced shortly. "Tonight or any other time."

"Very well," he snapped. "Will you please deliver this message, Lieutenant?"

I drew myself up to convey to him my resentment at him giving me orders. But he went right on. "The family of Baroness Vetsera will do everything to prevent the Crown Prince from seeing her. He has dazzled her, befuddled her. He has compromised her. Her uncles, her brothers are prepared to defend her good name, and to demand from His Highness an explanation."

"Are you their ambassador, Lord Greaves?" I asked, pretending to be amused.

"No." There was the ring of steel in his voice this time. "You are quite right. I am wasting my time talking about the Baroness' family. But—" pursing his lips. "You tell your royal lord that I—I—that he must reckon with me."

AT that moment, my ears, which had been trained to listen for the Prince's footsteps, now detected a faint sound. The Prince was coming down the path toward us, toward the carriage he knew was waiting. Toward Lord Greaves whom I did not want him to meet.

The Prince walked with a peculiar swinging gait which gave his steps a definite rhythm. One heavy sound, one light sound, and my heart sank as I heard that tap, tap, come closer and closer.

Did Prince Rudolph meet Lord Greaves? Or did Hugo prevent the interview that the Englishman desired?

What was the outcome of the Prince's love for the beautiful Austrian baroness? These questions are answered in the next issue of TRUE STRANGE STORIES. *The truth is revealed—the truth of the odd romance on which history has kept silent.*

Cunning minds were scheming to thwart the love of Rudolph and Mary; yet the Crown Prince planned to outwit them. The unexpected climax of this surprising narrative comes in the final instalment, which will appear in April TRUE STRANGE STORIES.

The Crime That Lured Him Back

(*Continued from page* 48)

the partition which separated the lobby or inner vestibule from the old bar-room. I could make out some of the words now: "Yuh ain't quite so pert as yuh reckoned yuh was, Mac. That gal ain't askin' yuh to dance—no, sir! You're askin' her, that's what! An' folks here 'bouts kin tell yuh thet Gert's my gal. An' yuh gotta reco'nize thet fact, Mac. D'yuh hear me?"

I WAITED to hear the voice of the man addressed as "Mac." But there was no response, and this puzzled me. Accordingly, I started to tiptoe nearer to the partition, to get a look at the men in the bar-room—only to stop abruptly as an old board broke beneath my feet with considerable noise. I stopped, and waited, but apparently the crackling noises had not been heard in the old bar-room from which the sound of the voice was issuing. Now came the voice again—the voice of a man I believed to be drunk. Shorn of the drunkenly stammering dialect which sometimes made me advance cautiously a step or two to try to hear better, the remarks, as near as I can remember, were as follows:

"We'll have another little snort o' redeye now. What's yore's thar, Shorty? Name yore pizen thar, Hard-Rock. Say thar, Jim Cantwell, let's have thet ol' song o' your'n. I reckon thar must be more'n twenty verses to thet thar song, an' I'm settin' up the redeye after each verse. Now, sing out thar, Jim. Thar ain't no ladies here. Yeah, thar's women awright—but I said thar ain't no ladies, an' I'm willin' to tangle with the fust hombre 'at thinks I'm gettin' insultin'. A lady is a gal what sticks to her man—not a gal thet's dancin' with every galoot thet happens in!"

I let go the handle of my gun as I eased it back into the holster. Women! Strange as it seemed, some party of men and women must have decided to spend a night in the old Louisiana House. And already there was some jealous argument in progress. I waited for some challenging voice to pick up the speaker who had mentioned the ladies slightingly. There are all sorts of men in the West, but for the most part I would say that they are chivalrous. Surely, I thought, someone would challenge the speaker's assertion that the women in the party were not ladies.

But, much to my surprise, there was no challenge. Then I heard a voice again—the same voice:

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34x4	3.50	1.90	31x5.25	3.20	2.00
32x4½	3.75	2.25	30x5.77	3.35	2.15
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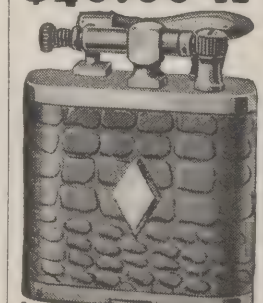

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"Say, that's a rip-snortin' little ditty, Jim, an' yuh sing it well. Darned well. Hey, thar, bartender, set 'em up. Bellies agin the bar thar, men. Red licker fur the men, an' some o' that sparklin' water fur the ladies. Aw, don't git on yore high hoss now, Gert. Cain't you take a joke? Mebbe yuh are a lady, but yuh don't look like it, an' yuh don't act like it. Yuh've danced three times with Mac, an' yuh got 'nuff powder an' paint on to scrape off with a knife. Now, yuh kin dance one with me. Tell that fiddler to stick this coin in his poke an' fiddle up. Tell him this money's with the compliments o' Tom Gaebner."

Still no other sound except that one voice—no woman's voice, no other man's, no singing, no fiddling. And that name! I recognized it. Tom Gaebner! Could this, perhaps, be the old recluse store-keeper known about Paradise Valley as "Pop" Gaebner? As I stood and continued to listen, I believed that it could. I had a vague recollection of having heard that voice on several occasions. But at such times the voice had been whining and complaining. Now it was buoyant, sometimes a trifle belligerent, but always festive. Yes, that was old Pop Gaebner's voice, and Gaebner seemed to be commanding the floor.

I crept the rest of the way over toward the partition that closed off the bar-room from the lobby, and through one of the gaping cracks peered into the lighted room. And then I was more surprised than ever.

A man of seventy-odd years stood before the dusty and sagging bar that had not been moved from the Louisiana House when all Oretown went trooping on to new diggings years before. The man was Pop Gaebner, the store-keeper at Paradise Valley, and from somewhere, possibly from his store supplies, he had found a few dozen candles, which were lighted and set up all along the bar, fastened into their own drippings. From a recess in the old hotel he must have located a number of empty champagne and whiskey bottles. These he had piled up on the bar in a high pyramid, as was the custom during drinking-bouts in the boom days of the Old West, when men were proud both of their good fortune and their ability to hold their liquor.

Not another soul was in the big room. Old Pop Gaebner had been talking to himself, or, rather, to the memories of fellow-revelers who had peopled this room in days far gone by. And I noticed no liquor; the whiskey-bottles were dirty and cob-webbed and empty; so Pop Gaebner, despite his thick talk, probably wasn't drunk, after all.

FOR several moments I stood in the shadows behind the partition, and listened to the ramblings of a very old man snatching back a spurious quota of his youth. I heard invitations to step up to the bar to drink, calls for the imaginary fiddler to play "Green Grow the Rushes, Oh!" and "Money Musk," and other dancing tunes played when Pop Gaebner was young Tom Gaebner. And as he joined in the dance to the tunes that must have come to his ears through some strange fancy, as he pirouetted, and swung his partner, and bowed here and there, and shouted and laughed, I leaned against the partition to squint through the cracks at that old face lit up by the rays of the candles. On the occasions when I had seen Gaebner at his store, he had been feeble and slow in his movements; now he was seized by the spirit of the dance and fired with some strange fervor. He was dancing about with the vigor one might expect from some lad in his twenties.

Some unnatural strength was feeding that old body. I thought I knew what it was, for I saw a strange light in those circled gray eyes beneath the bushy white brows. And then his laugh, his shrieks, his gestures and babble, made me certain of it—Gaebner was stark, staring mad.

AND then, as I leaned in astoundment against the partition, the rotten old timbers gave way, and fell in with a tremendous thud. I was actually catapulted into that big lighted room where the old man sang and danced and shouted in demoniac glee.

I had meant to enter that room anyhow, and, in fact, had been considering how best to do it; how to humor the old fellow; how to get him out of that damp, crumbling structure and away to better shelter and to medical treatment. Now the collapse of the ancient partition had forced my hand.

The Thrills of the Air Fighters

Conked—on the wrong side of the Meuse! He looked up with a ghastly smile. Five Fokkers circled above him like so many buzzards, while grinning German faces peered at him.

"Well, give me the works, you blue-eyed devils," he shouted. "I've got one more trick, and here goes."

Follow Jim Benton through that last trick of his when faced with certain death in this most tense and thrilling story of air-battles in the March issue of FLYING STORIES, a Macfadden Publication.

On the news stands February 23rd. Twenty-five cents. Thirty cents in Canada.

As I stumbled into the circle of candle-light, Pop Gaebner ceased his mad, unreasoning dance. He glared at me out of strange-looking eyes, and in another instant was upon me. I tried to reach for my holstered gun—but old Gaebner's claw-like hands were about my throat. I could see his scanty thatch of white hair as I struggled to free myself; his head was bent low, and in a second I knew the reason—his fang-like teeth were sunk into my right forearm just as I got my hand to my gun-butt. My six-foot, twenty-eight-year-old strength seemed entirely inadequate to cope with the maniacal strength of this madman. Before I knew it, I was throttled almost into unconsciousness; the lights danced and blurred before my aching eyes. I found myself stretched on the filthy floor, and between me and the bar was Pop Gaebner, with my gun in his hand, the blued ring of it glistening in the candle-light. And when Pop Gaebner spoke, there was cold fury in his tone.

"Spyin' on me again, eh, Mac?" he said. "an' whar's the gal? She ain't here now. Yuh took her. Whar?"

I had previously heard him ranting against some individual whom he called "Mac"—evidently one he regarded as an arch-enemy. His hate for "Mac" seemed an obsession with him. Now it was evident that I was "Mac" to this crazed old creature.

"Stop!" I shouted, as he raised the gun. "Stop, Gaebner! You know me. Don't pull the trigger of that gun!"

I looked up in terror at that old seamed face. For just the fraction of an instant, there was a faint light of reason in the old eyes—then that rational spark faded like dying embers in a grate. In its place came the light of insane terror—and rage.

"Know yuh?" came the answer. "In course I know yuh! Yuh reckon yuh kin scare Tom Gaebner by comin' back from the grave, do yuh? Y'ain't found yit thet thar ain't no scare in Tom Gaebner?"

I tried softness. "Come on, now, put up the gun, Pop!" I pleaded. "Put it up. Don't you remember?—when I bought this slicker in your store at Paradise Valley. Now, let's talk sensibly, Pop—"

Once more the disordered mind of the old man apparently brought him back to scenes of old time revelry. "Pop?" he echoed. "Pop? Yuh mean 'Pop Goes the Weasel,' eh? Awright, Fiddler. Play up! Give us 'Pop Goes the Weasel.' An' I'm dancin' this with Gert. She's my gal. Whar is she? Gert! By Gawd, yuh took her. Yuh stole her!"

He advanced a step menacingly, his lips drawn back from his snaggled teeth. "Ef yuh don't git her, Mac," he threatened, "then yuh're a dead hombre! Whar is she? Whar's Gert?"

LOGIC was out of place here. I had been forced into a part; forced into trickery. I tried to set myself for a leap at this crazy man who thought I was "Mac," and might any second rob me of my life. "You want Gert?" I said soothingly. "Sure! There she is, right back of you. Look around. See, she's smiling at you."

When Pop Gaebner looked around, it was my intention to leap. But a new look of cunning had come into the old eyes; the cunning of a certain type of paranoic.

"Yuh cain't scare Tom Gaebner—ner yuh cain't trick 'im!" came the gloating old voice. "Now I know yore game. Yuh're out to steal Gert agin, ain't yuh, Mac? Yuh stole her once, stole her from me. Yuh made more money than me, didn't yuh. Yuh bought her, that's what. An' what did I do, Mac?" The thin old lips parted in a chuckle—but the gun was still aimed straight at me.

"What did I do? Huh? I let yuh live fur a while. I let yuh pan down in Shotgun Gulch, didn't I? An' then what did I do? Huh! I come in an' killed yuh, didn't I? Huh! Yuh ain't so all-fired smart. Yuh ain't near as smart as me. I shot yuh through yore head, an' I put the gun in yore hands, an' I fixed it so thet ol' Pete Sanchez found yuh, didn't I? Sooey-cide, thet's what the county said. Awright. I fooled 'em. An' now yuh reckon yuh kin scare Tom Gaebner by comin' back from the grave, don't yuh? Waal, yuh cain't. I killed yuh once, Mac, an' by Gawd, I'm goin' to kill yuh agin!"

The palsied old hand was shaking; Pop Gaebner had worked himself up by his own fury. I could see his index finger curling about the trigger of my Colt.

I threw myself flat on the floor as the sound of a shot rang through the deserted old hotel and plunked into the wall back of me. Then I made a dive for the knees of Gaebner, and in a fraction of a second we were tussling about the floor. Once more I saw his white head turn so that he might sink his teeth into me, but I got him by the throat, and, I am sorry to admit it, but it was quite necessary, began to choke him into unconsciousness. It was to save my own life.

I do not like to go into the details of that fight in the old bar-room of the Louisiana House, and I wish no glory for the victory of a twenty-eight-year-old man over an antagonist in his seventies. I think that's why the struggle lasted so long. I could not put my full heart into battling with a man of that age.

But it was not a one-sided struggle. With a surprising agility, Gaebner had reached over and clutched the gun that had dropped as we were tussling. He fired at me, but I wrenched up his arm, and the bullet passed over me. Another second and he had brought the gun down on my forehead—I have the V-shaped scar to this day—and I felt my senses leaving me. I had no choice but to arouse my own appetite for the struggle, wrest the weapon away from him, and use the gun-butt on his head.

I feared that I had killed him, but after I had done my best to bring him around to consciousness and was beginning to think it was a futile job, he suddenly opened his eyes, leaped up, and was upon me again. But this time his efforts were feeble. His aged strength had been spent. I soon had him dragged out to the crumbling veranda and bound to my saddle with my stake-rope.

When Pop Gaebner, with me leading my horse by the bridle-ring, had been carried a few miles in the cool night air towards San Sebastian, he seemed to be more rational.

"Whar the devil we goin'?" he called at me.

"We're going into San Sebastian," I replied. "You know me, don't you, Pop?"

I stopped and lit a cigarette. Gaebner peered through the glow at my face. "I reckon so," he said. "Thet slicker yuh got on come from my store. I sell the best slickers in Colorady. Say, what yuh got me all hawg-tied fur, young feller?"

"Pop," I cross-examined, "who was it you killed back in Paradise Valley?" I waited to hear the answer. During that walk of a few miles at the head of my horse I had been thinking. Was what I had heard the mere chimerical fancies of a demented old man, or had there been some truth in Gaebner's babble? "You said back there in the Louisiana House that you killed someone," I charged. "You killed Tam McLeod, didn't you, Pop, and then fixed it so it looked like suicide."

"Thet's a lie!" came the fierce reply. "Thet's a lie!"

Once more I feared that I would have to struggle with the old man, who tugged at his ropes, began to froth at the mouth, and finally reverted to his crazed vision of past glories—chattering out instructions for dances, inviting imaginary men to the bar to drink, calling for "Gert" and cursing at "Mac."

When we arrived in San Sebastian, I turned over Pop Gaebner to the doctor who ran a tourist sanitorium there. It was nearly dawn when I got into bed. And then I did not sleep, for I planned some careful investigation work for the next several hours.

It took me more than hours, though. It took me the better part of a week. My first call was upon old Pete Sanchez in the poorhouse at Salida. I had planned to question Pete as to just how he had discovered the body of Tam McLeod back in Paradise Valley; as to whether Gaebner had taken him into collusion in murdering McLeod, if murder it was, or if Sanchez had come across the supposed suicide accidentally. That trip was disappointing. Old Pete Sanchez, I learned, had died three weeks before, and was buried in the little cemetery on the poor-farm.

My next trip was to an old man who, rumor stated, had been a bartender at the Louisiana House when it had been running full tilt. He was being supported by relatives near Trinidad, Colorado.

"Yes," he said, in reply to my questioning, "I kin remember this Gert that yuh talk about. She was one o' the dance-hall gals, darned good looker, too. Yellah hair an' blue eyes. Gert Hanson, her name was. Yes, Tom Gaebner was crazy over her, an' I reckon he was mighty jealous o' Tam McLeod. They was fightin' an' brawlin' half the time. She married Tam McLeod, an' made him a darned good wife, too, 'cordin' to what I heerd. Tom Gaebner was never the same afterward. Golly! Them days seems a long time ago!"

At the county clerk's office at Salida, I found the records of Thomas McLeod's marriage to Gertrude Hanson.

My final proof of old Gaebner's guilt came when I interviewed Sheriff Dunn's deputy at Salida, and was allowed to take the gun with which McLeod had supposedly committed suicide. It had been McLeod's own gun, but I had the gun-butt carefully photographed by an expert from Denver. And some of the finger-prints on

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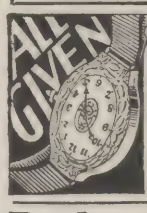

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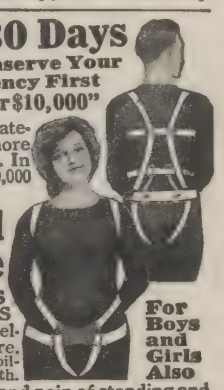

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the gun-butt matched those that were taken from Pop Gaebner's hands at the San Sebastian Sanitarium. It seemed to tie things up nicely, and prove that Pop Gaebner, smarting under the wounds of vanity that McLeod's success with Gertrude Hanson had caused, years before, had finally reached the point where he could stand it no longer, and had murdered McLeod, but had trickily arranged matters so that McLeod was thought a suicide. That Gaebner had been crazy at the time of the murder was quite likely. I was not sorry when I learned that Gaebner had died two days before my return to San Sebastian. His anguish in his rational moments, his exposure on that rainy night, and, I am afraid, the injuries received in his struggle with me, had proved too much for a man of his advanced years.

As I rode back to San Sebastian the day after my investigations were completed, I had a whim to pass through Oretown. Workmen were already busy there, making ready for the new railroad cut-off which would run through the deserted mining-camp and wipe it from the map. Oretown has disappeared nearly these twenty years—gone like Tam McLeod, and Pete Sanchez and Pop Gaebner.

The Freak They Bought Four Times

(*Continued from page* 58)

counsel would be of inestimable value. They came almost immediately.

So while the meeting downstairs pursued its deliberations on points of order and stodgy routine, up in that room of Ernst's one of the strangest subjects ever discussed held the burning attention of the five of us.

BUT hardly had we begun before another surprise came that nearly swept us off our feet and left us almost devoid of our reason.

"A most interesting matter," Ernst began by way of explanation. "Dr. Warren, here, Jastron and I, through a coincidence, have been working on similar cases. Two strange bodies have come to us in the last few weeks, cadavers whose deaths occurred due to a new and unrecorded malady. Jastron and I attempted by dissection and study of one body to determine the cause of the disease. Warren worked by himself on another. Neither Warren nor we knew about the other's study. Each of us thought the body on which he worked was the only specimen existing that showed symptoms of some rare and unheard-of disease.

"Now, suddenly, we find that from among all the millions of people on earth, these two young men had died of exactly the same thing—this new and strange malady."

"Most interesting," said Lentz, gaining enthusiasm. "What was the nature of the illness?"

"That's the strange part of it," Ernst returned. "Arrested flexibility. Pre-mortem rigidity, extending from birth."

"What!"

Lentz almost leaped out of his chair.

"Why, I've had a case of that myself," he cried. "A body came by express. I paid nearly a thousand dollars to have it delivered!"

We stared at him in amazement. Had we lost our reason? We must have seemed like dummies, our mouths agape, our eyes wide. But that announcement served only as a prelude to what was to come.

We heard Leroy gasp. We turned to look at him.

"Arrested flexibility?" he said weakly. "Pre-mortem rigidity? That's the very thing I, too, was working on. I also had a body sent me by express. Also that of a young man. Good God! That's four of them!"

Leroy's words left us stunned. Four bodies, in all of which death had occurred in the same strange way—from that same strange disease!

"It can't be true!" Ernst cried.

"It is true," said Lentz. "We are not children. The evidence is before us. The thing is terrible. Paralysis. Maladjustment of the balance. We might eventually become a nation of idiots."

The more we thought about it, the more astounding it became.

WE began to check up. Each had received a body. Each had paid approximately a thousand dollars on delivery. In each case it had been understood the victim had died of tuberculosis, even though the cadaver showed no symptoms of that disease.

None of us had seen it used in the press.

"The disease is slow-working," Leroy attempted to explain. "I first observed the man back in 1923. Two years is a long time. Perhaps the disease is only now reaching a climax."

The suggestion seemed logical.

Discussion followed. Shocked by our discovery, we agreed to bring the cases to the attention of the Association generally. Ernst and Lentz quickly were appointed to prepare the report. They set to work immediately. The rest of us filed out, feeling that the very air about us breathed menace, filled as it must be with the germs of that terrible disease. We agreed to return later to sign the report.

But that report was destined never to be made public after all.

I sat in my room, thinking, overwhelmed by the strangeness of this machine we call the human body, appalled at the frailty of the human mind. Suddenly the jangle of the telephone made me jump. It was Leroy.

"Can you meet me in Ernst's room in ten minutes?" he asked.

"To sign the report?"

"Maybe. And maybe not. Come up, please."

I went up. The others already were there, like myself thoughtful and perturbed. But Leroy had about him an unusual air of affability.

"Ah, gentlemen," he said, as though rather pleased with himself. "We all need relaxation. We've been too intent on this thing. Lay the report aside. We've got the wrong viewpoint. Let us forget the whole matter for a while. I want you all to be my guests at dinner. After that—well, I ran away this afternoon to seek relaxation myself and made a discovery. I have a little surprise for you."

After taking us to dinner, he drove us to Coney Island.

After a while, he stopped before a sideshow, its exaggerated pictures of freaks flung high above us. Quickly he purchased a strip of green tickets. He turned to us almost with the gesture of a showman himself.

LEROY led the way into an ordinary freak show. It was dark and ill-smelling. The "professor" was describing the company of unfortunates that had been assembled.

I groaned. He had discovered another freak, I thought. I never wanted to see freaks again. Bearded ladies, leather-skinned natives, giants and pigmies, could all go straight to the devil, for all of me.

"Is that all?" asked Lentz.

"Not quite all," Leroy returned. "Now,

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we shall see."

The "professor" herded his spectators to the farthest corner. Lights flashed on, illuminating a small platform. The crowd surged forward to see.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began. "Here we have the most amazing curiosity in all human existence. He has been examined by doctors the world over. They are baffled by his case. He is Baron Albert, scion of an ancient Bavarian family. He is called the Human Rod. He can neither bend nor sit—"

I BLINKED. I shook my head. I looked again. Out of a darkened corner emerged a tall young man, swaying in a lugubrious, pendulum-like gait, inching forward, his body as rigid as a pole.

"It's Alvin Fairly!" I blurted. "But the man is dead! I dissected his body myself!"

"I, too," cried Ernst.

"And I," said Lentz.

There remained Leroy.

"I thought I did," he said at last, a rueful smile on his face. "I thought I dissected the body of Alvin Fairly. But there he is, gentlemen. You can see for yourselves."

"But the others—those other bodies!" Jastron cried. "Whose were they?"

"Well, whose were they?" said Leroy. "Of four young men. But how did they die? Did any of you search for any other cause than the one you expected to find?"

We stared at each other dumbly. A light dawned on us.

"Then it's murder! It's a case for the police!" Lentz cried.

"Is it?" Leroy's tone became serious. "What can you prove? If you were like me, you received a body from a rather vague source, for it certainly did not come from any known supply house or hospital. You supposed it was Alvin Fairly's, since you had correspondence with, or had been aproached by, his father. In your eagerness to get at the secret behind his strange paralysis, you threw away the packing case, the coverings. Once you had examined the body, and failed to discover what you were seeking, you had the body destroyed, or buried. Suppose you say it's murder. Where's the evidence?"

"You see," Leroy was speaking again, "when Warren made that proposition to Fairly's father, he put an idea into the man's head. The man was guileful enough to seize and elaborate on it. He not only bargained with Warren, but he approached us all, trafficking on our enthusiasm, selling his 'son's' body four times."

"He met me in Milwaukee," Ernst broke in.

"And me in Berkeley," said Lentz.

"We were quick to bite," Leroy said, "for the young man's malady was genuine enough. Then August Fairly let the proper time elapse and sent each of us a human body for which we each paid approximately one thousand dollars. Did any of you really identify the cadaver you had as that of Fairly?"

We had been duped. That was plain. Each of us had taken for granted we had the one and original Alvin Fairly when each of those four bodies was delivered. And now, here he was, still at his old profession, as alive and apparently in as good health as ever.

Lentz' crashing words brought us to our senses.

"By heaven!" he cried, "it is a case for the police. And I'm going to take it to them. Fairly's father has done murder for a handful of money, and we've paid him for the privilege of disposing of his victims. I for one am going to see this thing through."

WE all of us did our best to support Lentz in his determination. But we never did get Fairly the elder convicted of murder. The police looked into his past and tried to establish whose had been the four bodies that had been shipped to us. But they never were able to ascertain this, and Fairly would not tell.

However, if you are permitted to examine the records at Sing Sing prison, you will find that Prisoner 454688 is really August Fairly, though you might not recognize him, for his black beard is shaved off. He is serving a term of eight years and the conviction against him is that of "obtaining money under false pretenses." At least, we were able to convict him on the agreements he signed for each of us.

As for Alvin, friends in New York write to me that he still flourishes in neighboring pleasure-resort sideshows and museums. They say he seems robust and well, despite the queer rigid condition of his body—the body his father was supposed to have sold to each of us. Alvin still awaits discovery by some scientist.

But it will not be one of us.

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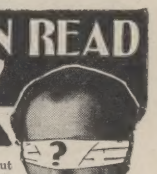

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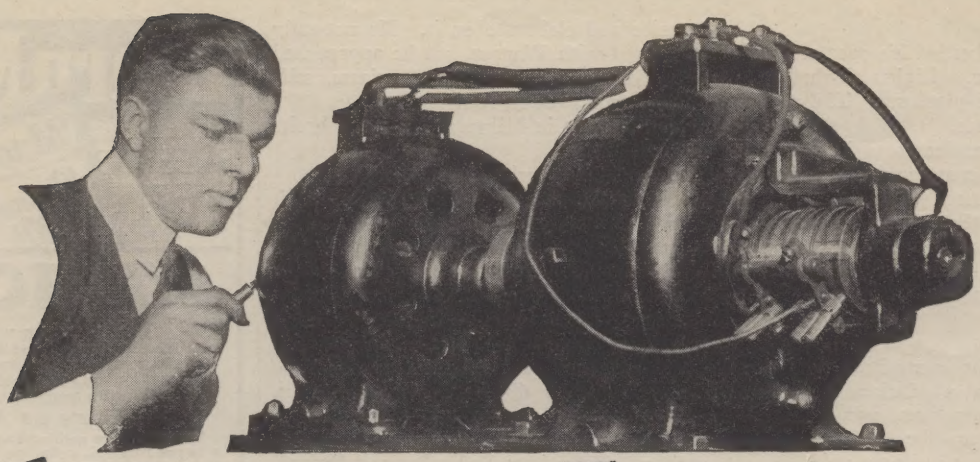

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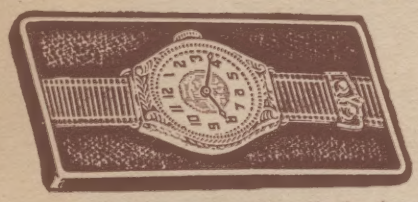

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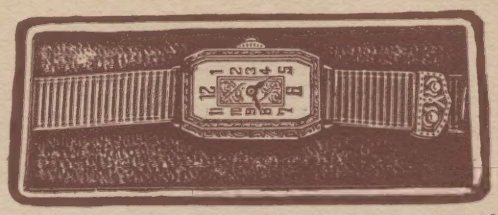

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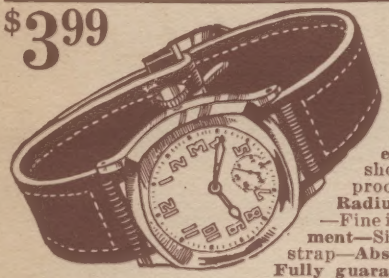

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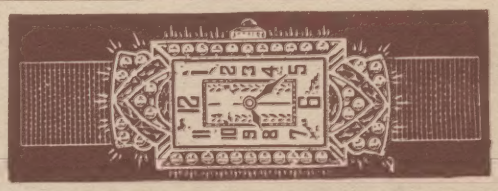

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